From The Past Will Come The Future; What It Holds, A Mystery,
Unrevealed Until Its Season, Something God Alone Can See.

Natalie Sleeth - 1986

The Westmoreland Story 1944-1949

Chapter ten from a book of personal reflections
by Reverend Russell D. Lowther,
pastor of Westmoreland Methodist Church, 1944-1949,
who inspired members of the congregation to see present and future
opportunities for ministry in Westmoreland and beyond
as he led them through the process of securing a new building.

FOREWORD
by Dewayne Lowther

My father, Russell Lowther, was a master story teller!!
Many of those stories are in his book
Personal Reflections!

Russell Dewayne Lowther

The Westmoreland Story

is chapter ten of ***Personal Reflections***!

Introduction
By
Dewayne & Ginnie Lowther

August, 2017

We have in our possession, 291 typed pages of ***"personal reflections"***, by Russell D. Lowther and a trunk full of photo albums and scrapbooks compiled by Catherine Lowther, documenting and affirming their years of serving families in Methodist and United Methodist congregations in West Viginia and Illinois.

In 1968, one chapter from those personal reflections was published under the title ***"Laughter and Tears in the Mountains"*** in which experiences from their appointment to a circuit of nine churches were shared and dedicated "To Nicholas County People, whose faith, love and friendship did so much to make our ministry possible."

> *Almost half a century after it was published, families of individuals whose stories were shared in* ***"Laughter and Tears in the Mountains"*** *continue to contact us to secure copies of this book!*

When we learned that the Westmoreland United Methodist Congregation in Huntington, West Virginia, was planning to celebrate a 90th Anniversary on September 30-October 1, 2017, we decided to make available a few copies of Chapter Ten ***"The Westmoreland Story"***, written by Russell Lowther in 1975, in which stories are shared about his appointment to serve as Westmoreland's pastor from 1944 through 1949 and circumstances surrounding construction of a new building. He did not include reflections about his second appointment to Westmoreland. In his Preface to ***"Laughter and Tears in the Mountains"***, Russell Lowther made it clear that he was making no attempt to be academic with his writing and that experiences shared were real. Names of people mentioned in the book were real. There was no fiction in the book.

There is no fiction in ***"The Westmoreland Story"***!!

On March 9th, 1952, the Westmoreland Congregation renamed the Church Social Hall LOWTHER HALL and Dedicated it to the Glory of God and in Honor of Rev. Russell Lowther, pastor 1944-1949 .... We have included photographs from that service at the end of these rememberances. The original plaque was later replaced with a bronze plaque.

Dewayne & Ginnie Lowther

Guide to reading Russell Lowther's reflections on

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Russell Lowther - Personal Reflections - Chapter Ten

Westmoreland 1944-1949

The Appointment

The 1944 Annual Conference was held at First Methodist Church in Parkersburg September 20-24. As you might well imagine from what I have written previously in other chapters of my post-retirement reflections, I was there on the front seat, full of hope, faith, and glad anticipation. In some ways it was like history repeating itself, for it was in that same church in September of 1933 that the Conference was held at which I had been appointed to my first pastorate as a Supply Pastor. Now, here I was again, this time to receive my first appointment after Seminary.

However, history was not going to be repeated in one regard. Whereas at my first appointment in 1933, I had been thrilled, overjoyed and excited at receiving my first appointment, lowly though it had been, this time I was going to be very disappointed and almost heart-sick over my appointment. In 1933 at the conference I had been only a local preacher seeking an appointment as a supply pastor. In this 1944 conference, I was a fully ordained member of the Conference, thirty-two years old, with degrees from both College and Seminary, and eleven years experience as pastor.

Sent By Superintendent To Visit Westmoreland During Conference

Acting on the suggestion of Dr. Zumbrunnen, Superintendent of the Huntington Distict, I went by bus to ntington that night and, early next morning, I saw the Westmoreland Community for the first time. What I w and heard that day convinced me that I should not accept appointment to serve as pastor of Westmoreland Methodist Church.

The little white frame church was located in lowland, and swampy ground, which had been flooded again and again through the years by Ohio River Flooding before the new flood wall had been built. The community was only sparsely settled. The little church had fallen into bad repair and was rotting down. There were only sixty-five members of the congregation. There was no salary set and no budget adopted for the new Conference Year. I learned that day that at the 4th Quarterly Conference, a terrible fight had taken place between the local church officials and the District Superintendent. The officials were very angry with the superintendent because he had practically forced them to buy a small four room house adjacent to the church for the purpose of having more room for future expansion. The little house was too small for a parsonage, but it was a valuable lot. The Superintendent had promised help from the district, but he had not come through with that help, and now the little church, with only 65 members, was unable to meet mortgage payments and the bank at Ceredo, where they had borrowed the money, was becoming very impatient with the local church.

Trustees Were Threatening To Abandon Westmoreland Methodist Church

It is understandable that the little church refused to adopt a budget for the following year and that they called a meeting of the trustees following the Quarterly Conference and seriously considered the advisability of nailing up the doors, abandoning the church. The building was unsafe anyway. They were expecting that the building would be condemned by the Huntington authorities, as the sills beneath the floor had rotted and could collapse any time. In fact, the floor did collapse later on, and the piano went through the floor during the singing of a hymn at a morning service! They had served notice on the superintendent that if the Conference, then in session at Parkersburg, appointed another pastor to serve Westmoreland, that they should advise him before he came that there was no salary, and no budget accepted for the new Conference year!

In addition to all this information about Westmoreland that I received that day, I also learned that there was no possibility whatsoever for me to attain the position as Chaplain at the Veteran's Hospital, which the District Superintendent had told me had all been worked out for me in advance. The Chaplaincy position at the V. A. Hospital, had been given to an Episcopal Minister in the West End of Huntington several weeks before. There was no chance for me to be in this position, which I had been promised by the superintendent!

The potential for future growth in the Westmoreland Community was indeed very great and just as the District Superintendent had told me. But in the meanwhile, how on earth could I live, support my family, and pay my college and seminary debts that were hanging over me? Where would they live? Could we possibly move into that tiny house, with four very small rooms and no basement? Would anyone in his right mind really accept such an appointment? I made up my mind that I would not accept appointment to serve Westmoreland.

When I arrived back at the Conference in Parkersburg, I went immediately to report my decision to Dr. Zumbrunnen, the District Superintendent. His response constituted one of the most unforgetable shocking moments in my ministry! "Now Russell", he said, "your appointment to Westmoreland is already made and it's too late to change it now!" When I told him I could not accept it and I would not go, he went on to say, in a sarcastic way, that I could just "take it or leave it" but the Conference had nothing else to offer me and would, therefore, leave me without appointment anywhere! "It's too late now," he had said, and this echoed in my mind!

I could see that my training at Garrett Seminary, under Dr. Murry Leiffer and his courses on ***Church and Community in Transition, would enable me to serve in just this kind of situation.*** However, it would take time, even years, to apply this knowledge as homes were being built and potential growth in the community was taking place. But in the meanwhile, how on earth could I live, support my family, where would we live? Could we possibly move into that tiny house, with four very small rooms and no basement? What about my family and how could I pay my college and seminary debts that were hanging over me?

I Accepted Westmoreland! There Was No Choice In The Matter

Thus, (to use a familiar Biblical phrase,) "It came to pass" that after I had completed College and Seminary training , the West Virginia Conference of The Methodist Church appointed me to serve as pastor of The Westmoreland Church in Huntington.

Major Factors Regarding The Westmoreland Church At The Time I Was Appointed To Serve There In September, 1944:

(1) There were only 65 members;

(2) The little frame church building, it's foundation destroyed by rot, was dangerous and being generally avoided;

(3) The Trustees were seriously considering total abandonment of the church and considering the possibility of using Ohio Valley Transit buses to attend Johnson Memorial or Central Methodist.

(4) A mortgage of $3,400.00 against the church held by a Ceredo Bank with payments overdue;

(5) At the 4th Quarterly Conference in 1944, discouraged and angry officials of the church, refused to set a minister's salary for the following year and refused to adopt any budget. They had advised the superintendent not to send any pastor;

(6) A tiny four-room cottage, far too small to serve as a parsonage for the pastor and his family, had been purchased under pressure by the Superintendent, who promised conference help but had ignored his promise; thus the congregation was not only discouraged but angry!

Regarding My Attitude Toward Westmoreland Appointment

Naturally, being a human being, I would like very much to have the records indicate some kind of heroic spirit, or saintly devotion to *"The Kingdom"* on my part in having accepted such an appointment as this was. But, alas! There is no way! I accepted this appointment because there was no place else to go! In all truth and honesty, I was not like the Prophet Isaiah who, when he heard the voice asking, *"Whom shall we send, and who will go for us"* replied: *"Then said I, here am I, send me!"* That is not the way it was with me and Westmoreland. When I learned in my trip to Huntington during Conference what the situation really was at Westmoreland, I had said to the superintendent, *"Here am I, DON'T SEND ME!"* but I was sent anyway!

I Was Appointed To A Church Without A Salarly For It's Minister
And With No Adequate Place For A Minister To Live!

Ironically, when I had been received into membership in the Conference, one of the traditional questions that I had been asked was: *"Are you in debt so as to embarrass you in the work of the ministry?"* At that time I had gone to the seminary entirely at my own expense and had accumulated enough indebtedness to embarrass me world without end! Now, in September 1944, here was that same Conference appointing me to serve a church which had no salary for it's minister! Surely this was irony in the first degree. I don't know how anyone could understand that situation.

Fortunately, a few weeks later, the good people of Westmoreland came together and agreed to try one more year to keep the little church going. There were only 65 of them, but they would do the best they could. They set my salary at $1,200.00 a year which I will explain further on in this chapter as I shall endeavor to tell the Westmoreland Story.

Arriving In Westmoreland:

After the Conference in Parkersburg, we went back to Weston and hooked up again to our covered wagon (a farm wagon purchased in Illinois to use for our move back to West Virginia) which we had stored at the Roger's Garage on the Buckhannon road, and started to Huntington by way of route 19 to Sutton and down the Elk River on route 4 to Charleston. At Charleston we traveled on the old route 60 to Huntington. There were not many hills to cross on those routes and we arrived safely in Huntington.

As we came down Third Street in the city toward Westmoreland, we were not certain that we were going the right way, for on my previous trip during the Conference I had gone by bus. Anyway, we stopped in front of a little grocery store on the corner and I went in to ask directions. It turned out that the owner of the store was Mr. O. K. Walker, who lived in Westmoreland and was the treasurer of the Westmoreland Methodist Church. This had been a fortunate coincidence. We had a very happy and jovial visit with Mr. Walker, accompanied by much laughter. Mr. Walker's first name was "Omen". We said that this accidental stop in front of his store was a "Good Omen!"Also his initials were "O.K." and that seemed important also as an indication that everything was going to be OK in this adventure in spite of all appearances to the contrary.

Following Mr. Walker's directions, we continued down along the flood wall and soon found ourselves traveling down Auburn Road through the Westmoreland Community. The community was so sparsely settled that it was almost like driving through an open field with a few houses here and there on either side of the road. The community was characterized by vacant lots which were adorned with broom-sage, swamp grass and high weeds.

For much of it's history, Westmoreland had gone without protection from the ravages of Ohio River floods. It had been practically inundated time after time through the years. Confidence in the community as a place to live and work, or to establish business enterprises, had, as one might say, been washed away as with a flood!

But one little group of good Methodist people had held on to their little white frame church through the years and had refused to give up. After each flood, they would come together to thank the Lord that they were still alive and had the strength to scrub out their little church, replace it's broken windows,and continue to worship and serve their Lord. The last flood that it had gone through before the floodwall was built, had reach it, the ceiling of the little church. The folding chairs, wooden pews and other furnishings, including the pulpit, ha e floated around and broken out all the windows. After the flood, some of the furnishings were recovered two or three miles below Westmoreland.

However, as we continued on down Auburn Road we soon came in sight of the little church and the tiny little house at Kentucky Street, which was to be our home for the next five years. The little house and church looked lonesome sitting out there in the field. Including the little house, owned by the church and in which we were to live, there were only four houses on the street.

Soon our covered wagon, a homemade trailer, which had on it everything in the world that we owned, was backed into the driveway beside the little house. No one had met us there when we arrived, and we had no key that would enable us to go into the house. A man and his wife, (Mr. & Mrs. Dudgen,) had been renting the house and some of their things were still there and they had not turned over the key. Anyway, there were no furnishings inside and we couldn't stay there that night even if we had the key. We unloaded our covered wagon into the garage out back, where, incidentally the mice and rats helped us unpack our boxes (as we were to learn later). We then went to a motel in the East End of Huntington which we had seen earlier that day as we came into the city on route 60 from Charleston, where we spent the night resting up and gathering energy for the next day when we would go to work on our problems.

Our Reception At Westmoreland

Our reception at Westmoreland was a little on the cool side. At best, it was a kind of awkward situation and understandably so, for after all, the good people of Westmoreland had been through an awful ordeal in recent months. At its fourth quarterly conference it had refused to approve a budget for the year and had as the District Superintendent not to send them any minister. Of course, at this time, they did not know that I knew about the fight that had taken place at the Quarterly Conference. Reverend Owen Martin, who had been serving as pastor of the church and chaplain at the Veteran's Hospital, had told me about all of this. He was leaving the church to go into full time work as a chaplain. He had not been living in the parsonage but in his own house in Spring Valley.

Anyway, everybody tried to put their best foot forward, keep calm, and just hope that everything would, in time, work itself out. There were four members of the church who were awfully nice to us and did their best to make us feel welcome. Mr. and Mrs. O. R. McCoy, Mr. Eugene Webster and Mr. John McQuaid. These were the ones who came near to help, but for the most part the others kept their distance from us for a few days. Mr. McQuaid came with his tools and hooked up the cookstove for us. Mrs. McCoy, whom we will never forget, saw that Catherine was having to wash our clothes by use of the old wash-tub and wash board, as she had been doing since we were married back in 1931, so she invited Catherine to come to her house on Chase Street and use her washing machine!

First Sunday At Westmoreland And The Bell Incident

Our first Sunday at Westmoreland was a memorable day for several reasons. It began in a humorous way when Mr. Webster, superintendent of the Sunday School, told me that it was the pastor's duty to ring the church bell because he lived just next door and it wouldn't be much bother. Other members would have to walk several blocks to get to the church. So, of course I told him I would be glad to do this.

When the time came I went into the church to ring the bell and found a small rope dangling from the ceiling in the church. I took hold of the rope and swung my weight on it from force of habit, because I had also been ringing the church bell in my student appointment in Illinois and it had been a large bell weighing several tons. However, when I came down hard on the rope in the little Westmoreland Church, all I heard was a faint little "ding" sound from on top of the church. Instead of the deep "bong, bong" sound of the big bell I was used

to ringing, all I got was this little "ding, ding" noise! It was only a small bell which had been taken off of a steam engine railroad locomotive! Anyway, the surprise and the irony of this experience somehow struck me in a humorous way and I laughed so hard that I had to sit down for awhile before I could finish ringing the bell!

Incidentally, mentioning this incident regarding the ringing of the bell, reminds me that about 25 or more years after that day someone wrote a little history of the church and said that the first thing I had done when I became pastor at Westmoreland was to build a bell tower on the little white church and install a bell. This was entirely in error. The Bell Tower was built by Mr. S. K. Brammel several years before I became pastor there. There were several other more or less serious errors in the little history that was published, but I never challenged it, nor told anyone at Westmoreland that I had even noticed them, for after all, what difference does it make now?

The first Sunday at Westmoreland was a kind of awkward situation. Everyone tried to be friendly and cheerful, but I think everyone knew the real feelings of both the new minister and the Congregation. Everyone seemed to have been pleased with the service and stood around a great while after church visiting and getting acquainted. They asked me to announce a meeting of the Official Board and to urge all the officials to attend as it would be of great importance.

First Official Board Meeting During My Pastorate:

On the first Monday evening in October, 1944, the officials came together for very important discussion and action. Although they did not adopt a budget that evening, they did agree on my salary, which they said would be $1,200.00 a year!

Most of the discussion had to do with the parsonage debt. They had paid $4,200.00 for the house and had been doing the best they could to keep up the payments. However, they had gotten behind, and still owed $3,400.00. They had also been carrying a current budget of $2,392.00. There were only 65 of them to contribute. The District Superintendent had promised faithfully that he would secure help for them through the Board of Missions and through other churches in the Huntington District but he had simply let them down!

I suggested that we should launch an all-out campaign to pay off the mortgage, but they would have no part of this. They said that they had been doing their part (and indeed they had) and now it was time for the District Superintendent to fulfill his promise. They had agreed to buy the little house only because he had urged them to do so and in good faith, that he would do what he had promised. They expected him to come through with his end of the bargain. If he did not, then the Bank at Ceredo could go ahead and foreclose!

These were indeed troubled times. I scarcely knew what to do next. I decided that all I could do was to just bide my time and keep on preaching and visiting and hope that as time went on things would change. Maybe the District Superintendent would come through with his promise to the people, or maybe their attitude would change and they would cooperate in a campaign for payment of the mortgage. It looked like all I could do was to live in hope even if I died in despair!

In the next several weeks I visited door to door throughout the Westmoreland community. As I did this, I kept a list of every name and address of persons and families who might be potential contributers to the parsonage debt payment, "if" and "when" I could ever succeed in getting a campaign started! "When that would be, I had no idea at that time!

The Last Straw!

After my period of several weeks of intensive visitation in the community and my list of potential contributers to the parsonage debt payment was complete and carefully listed on 3x5 assignment cards, I called a meeting of the Stewards. The meeting was held in the living room of the little parsonage. I told them what I had done and explained my plan for the campaign, asking each steward to receive an assignment to go out in the time schedule I had planned and announced that evening and make the solicitation! The Stewards had not changed their minds regarding the parsonage debt. They would not cooperate now in a campaign to pay it off. They said they were still waiting for the District Superintendent to do as he had promised.

John McQuaid was the only steward that night who agreed to take an assignment and help in the campaign There will be much written about him later in this chapter. I consider this one of the most inspirational stories in my entire ministry. What a dilemma I was in now! What more could I do than I had already done? The parsonage debt was a road block to any thoughts I might have regarding a building program for a new church! This refusal by the stewards to assist in a campaign was indeed the very last straw!

I Came Very Near Leaving Westmoreland

This meeting of the stewards seemed to mark the end of The Westmoreland Methodist Church, but even more than that, it seemed to sound the "Death-knell" of my ministry in the West Virginia Conference.

Catherine and I talked over our situation and agreed, that in all probability, the best thing for us to do would be to leave Westmoreland and accept an appointment offered by Dr. Claude Cooper, a District Superintendent in Iowa. Dr. Cooper, the father of one of my Seminary classmates, had written to us after we came back to West Virginia, telling us that if we changed our mind about returning to West Virginia, he would pay all expenses to bring us to Iowa where he would have a good appointment for us.

We went to the phone to call Dr. Cooper. How it happened that we did not go through with it I guess I will never know. We must have been at the phone for an hour, just sitting there thinking things over and trying to make certain that we were doing the right thing. I finally decided that I would take one more walk on the flood wall along the Ohio River and think it over before I called. Incidentally, the flood wall along the Ohio River was a favorite place of meditation for me while at Westmoreland. Here I could overlook the whole community, and be undisturbed as I talked to the Lord and also talked a lot to myself!

Divine Guidance And Help On The Wall!

You probably have heard the expression many times: "It drove me up the wall!" The wall in this case however, was a real wall! The flood wall, within a long city block of our home at Westmoreland was, as I have said, a favorite place of meditation and personal prayer and devotion.

On this particular evening, as I walked the wall, feeling sorry for myself and talking to the Lord, and also talking a lot to myself, a very strange thing happened. As I stood at one point looking over the sparsely settled community and the little white church sitting there in all of its great trouble, I suddenly found myself thinking of the church as a person and comparing it to Christ the night he had been betrayed and arrested in Gethsemane. In many ways the little white Church was in the same position as Our Lord had been on that night. Matthew had described it in this way: *"And they arrested him and led him to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter followed him at a distance, as far as the court-yard of the high priest and going inside, he sat with the guards to see the end...." (Matthew 26; 57-58).*

The Little White Church had undoubtedly had its Gethsemane, and was at that very hour being subjected also to an unjust trial before the minds of Methodists and non-Methodists alike throughout all of Westmoreland, the Huntington District and the West Virginia Conference. Undoubtedly there were people everywhere who had promised to help but had only given "lip service" to Westmoreland and were now following at a safe distance and folding their arms and making themselves comfortable in the court yard and just waiting and watching ***to see the end of the little Westmoreland Methodist Church***! And as I thought of my own personal relationship to this situation, I found myself remembering those memorable words of Jesus who once asked his disciples: *"And will you also go away?"*

At that moment, in an attitude of deepest repentance, I resolved that ***"I would not be one of the arm folders, watching for the end of the little church"***, and ***"I would not go away! If the end of the little church was at hand, and it surely seemed that it was, I would make doubly certain that my own conscience was clear in the matter.*** I did not at that moment know what more I could do than I had already done, ***but I would do "something", I could at least "try" something!***

God answers prayer! Before I have finished this writing about Westmoreland, I will tell what you may consider a "fantastic story" of several incidents in which ***prayer was answered and near miracles occurred!***

As I continued to talk to The Lord and praying for guidance, ***two courses of action suddenly were as clear to me as though someone had written them out and handed them to me!*** These could not have been clearer if they had been written, or spoken audibly. One of them had to do with my own heart and the other with The Westmoreland Methodist Church:

(1) ***It was clear to me that I must change my own attitude;*** that I must quit feeling sorry for myself; that I must not loose sight of the fact that there had been other people besides me who had been dealt with unjustly. I was by no means the only one! Other people had endured hard things too.

(2) Furthermore, had I not often prayed that The Lord would use me in his Kingdom? Now that a difficult and discouraging task in His Kingdom was laid upon me, why did I resent it?

(3) Also, had I not joined with the congregation many times in singing "Must Jesus Bear the cross alone and all the world go free? - - no, there's a cross for everyone and there's a cross for me? Indeed I had, and now that something of the nature of a "cross" was before me, was I to feel sorry for myself, and start complaining about it?

(4) Still further, what had I gone to seminary for in the first place? Had I gone in order that I might later command a larger salary, or had I gone to prepare myself to be of service in the Kingdom of God? Had I really been asking to be appointed to some easy place in the Conference while the hard and difficult challenges were assigned to my brother ministers?

(5) All of these and other questions came suddenly flooding into my mind and I believe that they were divinely imposed. They led to an attitude of repentance in my own mind and heart instantly that evening on the flood wall, and thus the first part of God's answer to my prayer involved me a person, and had resulted in the rebirth of "A right spirit within me."

(6) In other words, "By Grace I had been saved through faith and that was not of myself it was a gift of God!"

God's answer to my prayer for guidance on the flood wall that evening also involved a plan of action into which I could lead the Westmoreland Church. It came in this way, namely, that as I stood there in the quiteness of that place, two episodes in the life of Jesus as told in the New Testament came to mind with such vividness that I had to believe that through them, God was trying to tell me something. One of these episodes had to do with Jesus sending out the 70, and it went on to say that these who were sent returned "rejoicing". The other episode had to do with Jesus having healed a man and, in accordance with the custom of that time, told him to go show himself to the priest. "And it came to pass that as he went he was healed."

As I continued to think about these two episodes in the life of Jesus, which had come marching together into my mind, it was clear what I should do next at Westmoreland. ***Not only was it clear to me "what" I should do, but also "how" it could be done. It was as though suddenly I could see the whole future at Westmoreland unfolding. Everything began to fall into place as though one were filling in the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle.***

A Community Survey With Unique Purpose:

It was clear to me that the answer to the problem then existing at Westmoreland was to conduct a Community Survey, but not just an ordinary survey with traditional purposes and methods. ***First: this survey that I now had in mind would be for the purpose of strengthening the spiritual lives of all would participate in it.*** It occurred to me that if the members of the church would go out two by two visiting in the community that they would become enthusiastic and inspired; their discouragement would be overcome; they would enjoy this activity. In other words, it would "come to pass" that as they went they would be healed and they, like the 70 that Jesus sent out, would return "rejoicing". This is what we needed even more than information and statistics from a survey at this time, although that too was of inestimable value later.

A second major objective of this unique Community Survey was directed toward overcoming the lethargy of the community and the city of Huntington regarding the Westmoreland Methodist Church. For the last several years, the idea that the church was going to be abandoned had poisoned the minds of people. It had come to the point that nobody paid any attention to the Westmoreland Methodist Church except the 65 loyal people who worshiped there. Everyone else seemed to ignore it.

However, this Community Survey would be designed to change all of this. The workers would be instructed to plant the seed thought in every home in Westmoreland that the Methodist Church was planning to build a new church, that the other Methodist Churches in the Huntington District and the General Conference Board of Missions and Church Extension were expected to help. It would be my duty as pastor to convince our workers of this fact before they went out on the survey. It wouldn't be easy but I knew it could be accomplished; that I could explain to them how I planned to use the information which they would gather for me in the survey and that at least the Board of Missions and Church Extension could not possibly deny help for us in the face of such circumstances unless they wanted to deny that they were even Christian.

A third major objective of the Community Survey would be to gather facts and statistics about the Westmoreland Community which I could use in an all out effort later to impress the Board of Missions and other Huntington churches that a new Westmoreland Methodist Church should be built. Without "facts" to back up what I was saying about Westmoreland there would be no use to ask any Board or church, or anyone else to help us build. Information which the survey workers would gather, would be represented by graphs, charts, maps, pictures etc. on turnover charts which I would use throughout the Huntington District in trying to sell the Westmoreland need for a new church, and be able thus to convince them that I knew what I was talking about. I knew that those who would work in this survey would understand the importance of all this and would attend our training sessions for the survey and do their best, carefully filling out their cards and reports.

There were other objectives, of course, in our Community Survey, but they were incidental. They included the listing of prospective members, the correction of membership rolls, the discovery of lost members etc. We were careful with regard to encroachment and any resemblance to proselyting but we were not apposed to adding a few names to our constituency roll wherever possible. The names and addresses of all church members regardless of denomination were promptly sent to their pastor. In most instances where Methodist families were found who belonged to another Methodist Church in Huntington the pastor was called on the phone and given the information. This was time consuming but most gratifying in its results later. It had great influence when we sought to gain official recognition and status as a district project. A warm feeling of friendship, interest and cooperation was felt throughout the district relative to the Westmoreland project.

The Women's Society Of Christian Service Sponsored The Survey

Finding the necessary workers for the Community Survey was a real problem. Morale was at its lowest ebb at that time and many whom I approached wanted no part of any program of visitation. I couldn't appeal to the young men of the church for they were across the ocean at war. I couldn't appeal to our stewards for the most of them were out of town during the week at their work as salesmen, etc. Then too, as I have already written, the stewards had not favored a campaign in the interest of the parsonage drive and would not be willing to take part in a survey as they didn't believe that any help would ever come from outside Westmoreland to help build a new church. Making a Community Survey seemed very unimportant at that time to them. Some of the stewards were favorable, but the most of them were not.

Finally in desperation I called Mrs. O. R. McCoy (Margurete), and asked her if she would call a special meeting of her WSCS, that I had a very important matter to bring before them, and needed their help. She was willing to do this, and soon the Woman's Society, which had only 25 members, were gathered at the church. They officially adopted the Survey, and in a few days teams had been organized and trained and were at work, surveying the entire community of Westmoreland!

The Survey was successful beyond even our fondest hopes. It was undoubtedly the very first real break-through of any kind that had occurred in this desperate circumstance. All three of the major objectives of the Survey were realized. ***After the first few calls had been made, the workers began to be real excited about it and returned "rejoicing" as the 70 spoken of in the New Testament had done.*** Throughout the community people everywhere were talking again about the Westmoreland Methodist Church. One could hear it in the grocery store, on the bus, in the streets, across backyard fences, and everywhere else! New faces appeared in church as people came out to see what was going on! In a very brief time I was fortified with a wealth of factual information which enabled me to influence any group I went before in the Huntington District, as well as the General Board of Missions and Church Extension. ***Once I had possession of the information and could answer any question that I might be asked, I became as bold as a lion and, believe me, I really poured it on!***

It bears repeating that, in my humble opinion, the Community Survey carried forward by the Woman's Society of Christian Service, ***made the difference between the life or death of The Westmoreland Methodist Church!*** Had Mrs. McCoy and her little society of 25 Methodist Women not come to our rescue in the way that they did, and at the precise time that they came, there would never have been a new Methodist Church in the Westmoreland Community. There is not room here to explain all of the factors which I know about. I will say, however, that had our program for building there failed at that time, it could not have been started again for a long while, perhaps even years, and by that time the new church would have been located in the Spring Valley section of Huntington, not the Westmoreland Community.

Now, after more than 30 years have gone by, the WSCS of Westmoreland Methodist Church, in reflecting upon the achievement of its little society in the survey held in 1944, may be justly proud, and may realize even more than it may have realized before just how very, very significant their service to the building program really was. It really, when boiled down, meant that the Westmoreland Community would have a Methodist Church! Had the survey not been made, the most successful building program that we had, would never have been! A later program, as I've said, would probably have taken the church away from Westmoreland and built in Spring Valley.

While I could not possibly recall the names of all who took part in that memorable survey, some of whom were not members of the WSCS and who lived only temporarily in Westmoreland, the following persons come to mind:

Mrs. O. R. McCoy, who was president; Mrs. H. T. Tucker, whom I had adopted as my Westmoreland Mother; Mrs. Jess Mosby; Mrs. W. L. Ellis; Mrs. Russell Plymale; Mrs. E. S. Webster; Mrs. Fred Webster; Mrs Eugene Hickman; Mrs. Merlin Thompson; Mrs. E. E. Clark; Mrs. "Vint" Jordan; Mrs. N. L. Craig; Mrs. Russell Lowther; Mrs. Joe Ford; Mrs. Harry Witham; Mrs. Minnie Stead; Mrs. G. C. Beck; Mrs. S. K. Brammell; Mrs. I. H. Carr; Mrs. H. J. Conley; Mrs. John McQuaid; Mrs. E. V. Jackson; Mrs. E. G. Mick; Mrs. Rolland Patrick; Mrs. O.K. Walker; Mrs. Ira Nutter; Mrs. Louise Perry; Mrs. Shirley Plymale; and there were others whose names will come to mind as this writing goes forward.....

Facts And Figures Concerning Westmoreland, 1944

As a matter of interest and also for the record I will include a few facts and figures regarding the situation in Westmoreland Church and Community at the time of the Survey, 1944. It should be kept in mind that all of the survey and other studies occurred at least two years before the Westmoreland Building program was adopted by the District. It did not become a project of the Huntington District until May 7, 1946, and I will have some most interesting things to write about that a little later. Suffice it to say at this point that if it had not been for the friendship and help of the late Dr. Rolla Kenaston, pastor of the Johnson Memorial Church, we never would have succeeded in getting help from the Huntington District. Dr. Kenaston was a dear friend and one of the greatest men I have ever known. I will write later on about how he used his power and influence in the District to keep us from going down to defeat in the Westmoreland Program.

Meanwhile, the following page is copied from the first report on the Community Survey as was presented by the Survey Committee in the Fall of 1944!

First Survey Report - 1944

The following report represents the number of families within the Westmoreland Community who either belong, attend, or who prefer denominations that are listed below. At the time of this report, approximately 125 homes are yet to be visited.

DENOMINATION:	NUMBER OF FAMILIES:
Baptist	181
Methodist	176
Christian	74
Presbyterian	32
No Preference	32
Church of Christ	21
Catholic	19
Holiness	14
Church of God	12
Episcopal	10
Nazarene	4
Christian Science	3
Grace Gospel Tabernacle	3
Congregationalist	2
Adventist	2
Pentecostal	2
Lutheran	1
Morman	1
Unity	1

Out of the 176 Methodist Families listed, only 33 families are represented in the active membership of the Westmoreland Methodist Church.

Within the area now served by the Westmoreland Methodist Congregation, there are five other existing congregations as marked in bold & underlined in the list above. The Christian Church and the Church of God are complete as far as building is concerned. Each of the other churches in the community have building programs underway at this time."

From Report Made In 1946

1930 Census	3,941
1940 Census	4,637
1946 Estimated	5,700 to 6,000

Population Growth In Families Anticipated:

57 new homes now under construction
1,500 additional building sites available

Westmoreland is the most likely area of future growth in the City of Huntington

Major Community Changes Anticipated:

- Enlargement of U.S. Veteran's Hospital with personnel living in area served by Westmoreland Methodist
- New Tri -State Airport to be reached through our community from all points of Huntington
- New four-lane highway through community
- New Westmoreland War Memorial Athletic Field
- New High School in initial planning stage
- Removal or re-location of B & O Railroad
- Development of rural area adjacent to Community

Inadequacy Of Present Methodist Church Building:

- The over-all outside dimensions of our entire building is 77' 1/2 x 33'
- 50 children under 12 years of age meet in classroom that is only 13x30'
- 13 Junior Boys meet in room 8'x21'
- 31 members of young adult class meet in a room 8 1/2' x 18'
- Our building has been weakened by floods before the flood wall was built.
- It is dangerous, especially in the class rooms, which are also a fire hazard!

Floor In One Half Of Church School Department Collapsed!

Speaking of the building being dangerous, the previous report was telling it like it was! One Sunday morning during church school classes, there was a big crash! The floor under one half of the church school department fell through to the ground. Dry rot in the timbers beneath the building caused by many floods before the flood wall was built, had caused this. It was so fortunate that no one was killed or injured.

Then a similar thing happened on Sunday morning in the sanctuary during the worship service. During the singing of a hymn there was another terrible noise as the piano fell through the floor! It was just one end of the piano that went down, leaving it dangling there at a crazy angle. Mrs. James Taylor was playing the piano at the time.

Collapsed Steps - A Most Humorous Incident

In all probability, the most humorous thing that happened during the whole Westmoreland program involved Dr. A. Hensel Fink from the General Board of Missions and Church Extension who came from Philadelphia to check out our situation. I had been writing to the General Board and doing every thing that I knew how to influence them to help us at Westmoreland. I finally asked them to send a representative from the Board to see our church and community and verify the truth of what I had been writing. They took me up on this and arranged to send Dr. Fink. On the evening he was to arrive, I went into the sanctuary to meet with the committee and stationed our 12 year old son, Dewayne, at the corner near the church to watch for the bus. When he saw a well dressed man carrying a brief case get off the bus, he asked if he was Dr. Fink and brought him to the side door of the church and when he started up the steps they simply collapsed, throwing Dr. Fink to the ground! He later said that we had rigged this so it would fall through with him and thus impress him that we really did need a new church! Of course we did not, but we all agreed that the steps couldn't have fallen at a more opportune time! Later, after miles and miles of red-tape we got $5,000.00 from the General Board.

Open House Every Day
How The Survey Information Was Used

When the house to house phase of the Community Survey was completed, a summary of the facts and figures regarding the community were illustrated on graphs, maps, drawings, pictures, etc. and displayed upon the walls of the Sanctuary where they created great interest. Not only did people gather around this display on Sunday, but many times people from Westmoreland and also from other churches in the up-town section of Huntington came by to study the display and discuss the information; especially after I had given my lecture a few times to congregations or official boards of other churches in the Huntington District. I think many came out of curiosity and some to check on the truth of things I had told them in my lecture.

One of the items in our Survey Display was of special interest to a lot of people throughout the City of Huntington. We secured a large map of Westmoreland and upon it marked the location of every Methodist family in the community, regardless of what local Methodist Church they belonged to in Huntington. Different colors, small circles, and other symbols were used. In giving my lecture on Westmoreland before the official board of other Methodist Churches in Huntington, I would capture their attention at any time by saying: "Now for example, your church has members living here in Westmoreland;" and then I would point out where they lived. Sometimes some "wise layman", thinking to cross me up, would say: "Oh yes? who are they? What's their names?" Then, with subtle amusement and pleasure, I would pull a list from my pocket and read out the names. Everybody would be surprised and afterward have more confidence in what I was saying, realizing that I did indeed know what I was talking about.

Perhaps the most serious of all negative factors which was obvious from our map which I used in my lectures on Westmoreland, was the matter of our local church's geographical location in our community. The church was located on one side of the community toward the river. It stood out like a sore thumb on my map, and there was a lot of discussion about this.

Many people thought that the new church we were hoping to build should be relocated and placed somewhere toward the center of the community. Many suggested that it should be built in Spring Valley or farther out toward the Veteran's Hospital. Two representatives of the General Board of Church Extension from Philadelphia visited the location twice before the matter was finally settled. The representatives were Dr. A. Hensel Fink, whom I have previously mentioned, and Dr. Carl Quimby. Dr. W. Vernon Middleton, Executive Secretary of the General Board, wrote letters regarding our plans and was intending to visit us but due to circumstances beyond his control, was prevented from doing so. Incidentally, Dr. Middleton, about whom I will write later on in this history, paid our Westmoreland Methodist Building Program the finest compliment that it received during the whole venture when he said that it was the finest church extension program under the Jurisdiction of his office at that time. I plan to explain this later in the writing.

Dedication Of The Parsonage - September 9, 1945

The Community Survey had ushered in a great new day for Westmoreland Methodist Church, as I knew it would! In a few days following the completion of the survey, a new list of prospective contributors to the parsonage fund debt was made and a new effort to pay the debt was started. We prepared a graph in the form of a Thermometer to display in the church and upon which the progress of the campaign could be kept before our people at all meetings.

Incidentally, my wife, Catherine, who saves everything, has the original campaign thermometer which was displayed in the church during the struggle to pay off the mortgage on the parsonage. It is indeed of great interest and historic value. It is seven feet long and three inches wide and was made out of one-eighth inch graph paper. A red crayon had been used to represent the mercury in the campaign thermometer. The goal of the campaign at the top was $4,200.00 The distance left to go was something over 6 feet. How slowly it went! A contribution of $5.00 would raise the "mercury" only 1/8th inch!

A contribution of $50.00 would raise the "mercury" one inch! At the beginning of this campaign, I personally solicited each prospect two different times. The first time I would be given a token contribution, probably just to get rid of me. After I completed the first round, I went back for a second time, reporting on the success of the first round, and would be given another contribution, and so on! Of course, it should be kept in mind, that I was doing this work personally because I did not want to risk being stopped a third time by the Board of Stewards. I had run into that wall twice before in my effort to get a campaign going to pay off the parsonage debt. But the Stewards had refused to cooperate in this because the district superintendent had promised to help, and thus far had not done so. They would not have bought the little house in the first place if the Superintendent had not practically demanded that they purchase it. It was not difficult to understand how the stewards felt about all of this, and who could blame them? They were already supporting their church financially in a most liberal way, and at that time the Westmoreland Methodist Church had the highest per-capita giving of any church in the entire conference. (I will tell more about this later)!

However, in a short time the stewards decided that they would join in the campaign and help. They probably felt sorry for me in the situation for everyone knew full well that the parsonage debt was a real stumbling bock, or rather more like an effective "road-block" to our building program. Anyway, as I recall, the stewards just paid it off. They divided the indebtedness between them and ended the whole matter.
On September 9, 1945, the little parsonage was dedicated in due and ancient form!

Dedication Day was a most memorable occasion. Those present to take part in the services were: Dr. T. M. Zumbrunnen (District Superintendent), Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston, (pastor of Johnson Memorial Methodist Church); Dr. A. E. Beckett, (pastor of First Methodist); Dr. F. S. Pollitt, retired Methodist Minister, who was an honored guest at the services and Mr. O. R. McCoy, President of the local Board of Trustees. Dr. Ivy Yoke was present also to bring the message at a service that evening. The Dedication had been well publicized and there were other happy features of the day in addition to the formal dedication. The following letter had been sent to all members and friends of the church and indicates some of the other things happening that day of dedication:

271 Kentucky Street
September 4, 1945

Dear Friends:

Please regard this letter as a personal invitation to you, your family and friends, to attend the Westmoreland Methodist Homecoming, next Sunday, September 9th, 9:45 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Please regard this letter as a personal invitation to you and to your family and friends, to attend the **Westmoreland Methodist Homecoming**, next Sunday, September 9th, 9:45 A.M. to 4:00 p.m.

Our church is now free of all debt and we are meeting to dedicate the parsonage, to observe Rally Day in the Church School, to enjoy a picnic dinner on the church lawn, to enjoy a Hymn Sing, and to hear a sermon by our District Superintendent, Dr. T. M. Zumbrunnen, who will dedicate the parsonage. We will also hear a sermon by Rev. Ivy Yoke, a former pastor. We are meeting to renew old acquaintenances and to make new friends. It will be a day of rejoicing!

Looking forward to seeing you next Sunday,
I am sincerely yours, Russell Lowther, Pastor

Hymns that were sung in the service of dedication gave expression to our inner prayers and feelings of Joy and Gladness. They were: "Come Thou Almighty King" "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing,", and "All Hail The Power of Jesus' Name."

Information On The Back Of Our Church Bulletin That Day!

TRUSTEES: O.R. McCoy, E. S. Webster, O. H. Mills, J. S. Richardson, S. K. Brammell, & F. B. Webster

BOARD OF STEWARDS: E. S. Webster, Russell Plymale, E. E. Clark, John McQuaid, M. R. Burchett, O. R. McCoy, Taylor Bing, O.K. Walker, Rev. G. H. Spriggs, S. K. Brammell, I. H. Carr, Mrs. Eugene Hickman, Mrs O R. McCoy, Taylor Bing, Dr. J. S. Richardson

BOARD OF EDUCATION: E. S. Webster (General Superintendent), E. E. Clark, Mrs. Eugene Hickman, Mr. Duane McCoy, Rev. G. H., Spriggs, Mrs. W. L. Ellis, Mrs. J. W. Traylor, Mrs. Russell Plymale, Mrs. N. R. Craig, Miss Ruth Brammell, Robert Webster, Russell Plymale, Mrs. E. G. Mick, Mrs. Jess Mosby, Mrs. O. R. McCoy

MINISTRY OF SACRED MUSIC: Mrs. Taylor Bing, (Choir Director), Mrs. James Taylor, (Pianist)

HONORED GUEST: We rejoice to have as our Honored Guest, Dr. F. S. Pollitt, whose kindly interest and faithful service will never be forgotten." _____

Big To-Do Over A Little House

A few of the preachers present that day chided me a little over having made such a "big-to-do" over such a tiny house. But I took all of this in my stride. It wasn't the first time I had been laughed at and made fun of in the course of The Westmoreland Building Program, and it was not the last time. However, there was method in our madness, and I knew very well that in the long run I would have the last laugh! And, as the saying is, "He who laughs last laughs the loudest!" Our joy and excitement on this day was not merely that we now owned the little house which we were dedicating, but also because the "road-block" that had stood in the way of our building program had at last been removed. In fact, on this very day, September 9, 1945, some important announcements were made regarding the forthcoming building fund drive and plans for beginning a building program for a new church. Little did anyone think that day on June 1st in 1946, we would be meeting again for the purpose of Ground Breaking for The New Church! On that occasion I would do the laughing!

How The New Westmoreland Methodist Church Was Designed

Several weeks before the Parsonage Debt had been paid, and being most anxious to keep things going, I decided to stick my neck all the way out! I do not know where I ever got the nerve to do what I did, but I did it anyway and I'm most awfully glad that I did! I went to the office of Mr. Albert F. Tucker, an architect, whom I knew to be a Methodist, and a member of the Beverly Hills Church. I explained to Mr. Tucker that I had come entirely on my own and that I had no credentials and had not been in any way officially elected or instructed to come to see him. However, I was the pastor of the Westmoreland Methodist Church and that we hoped to build a new church. There were some hopes I said that other churches of the Huntington District might help us, and that maybe the Board of Missions would make a contribution but all of this was a very uncertain thing at this time. Anyway I went on to tell him that I was trying to get something going in this direction and I needed to have something that I could show the people of Westmoreland and elsewhere, that might inspire them to contribute to a building fund drive. I then asked him if, without any obligation to me or my church, if he would design a church building for us?

I could see that Mr. Tucker was very amused at me and he threw his head back and laughed out loud! I laughed a little myself, but it was a very awkward moment for me, and even as I stood there I could hardly believe what I had done! It took a lot of nerve to ask a busy architect to do something like this without any financial remuneration being assured. But this is exactly what I did! I told him, of course, in the event we were successful and got things going at Westmoreland, then he would be paid.

Mr. Tucker then told me that he would be glad to design a church for us. He gave me a list of the information that he would need, including the size of the building lot, the seating capacity we wanted the church to have, the number of classes, etc. He laughed at me again when I told him that I just happened to have this information on a piece of paper in my pocket. There was some information concerning the building lot which I did not have, and he said he would drive down that way and look the situation over that evening.

In a few days he called to say that he had our ***New Westmoreland Methodist Church*** designed, and had his artist to make a painting of the way it would look when it was built. I could call by his office and get it the next time I was up-town. In about 20 minutes I was in his office!

The local Building Committee, headed by Mr. Russell Plymale Chairman, made very few changes in the plans as suggested by Mr. Tucker. Later, after the Westmoreland Building Program became a District Project, which I will explain further on, the plans were reviewed by an advisory Committee which consisted of Mr. B. C. McGinnis, Sr., of the Johnson Memorial Church, Mr. Robert F. Knight of First Methodist Church, and Mr. S. K. Burrell of the Central Methodist Church. Also I presented the plans in due time to the Huntington District Minister's Association, of which I was president. When we were satisfied that the plans were adequate to meet the needs of our growing community, we forwarded them to the office of the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension in Philadelphia, where they were reviewed and approved.

Stained Glass Windows And Furnishings

The beautiful stained glass windows in the church help to make of the sanctuary one of the most beautiful in the city of Huntington. They were designed by the H. J. Smith & Son studios in Philadelphia by a Romanian artist, Mr. John Bogdan. One shade of wavy blue in the border of the windows is from Belgum; one shade of blue is from New York and a third shade of blue is from Milton, West Virginia. Glass in the Medallions is from England, Germany and West Virginia. The steel sash in the windows is from St. Louis, Missouri, while the stone in the sills is from Indiana. Some of the capstone used was from Ohio.

The Medallions chosen for the windows and the arrangement of them by the committee and me, was intended to represent chronologically the life of Jesus from his Nativity to the Ascension. The story of his life in stained glass begins in the first window to your left as you stand in the back of the sanctuary facing the chancel. It continues on to your left as you walk up the isle toward the chancel and then to your left also as you turn to start back again to the back of the Sanctuary. The windows, and the names of those who provided them are as follows:

The Nativity, donated by Mr. & Mrs. Curtis Watts and Don Watts

Jesus in the Temple, donated by Dr. and Mrs. J. S. Richardson and Mrs. J. F. Richardson in memory of the late Dr. J. Frank Richardson, Methodist Minister

Jesus Blessing Little Children, donated by Mr. & Mrs. O. R. McCoy and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bowe in loving memory of James Fredrick, infant son of Fred and Edna McCoy

Jesus and the Woman at the Well, donated by Mr. & Mrs. O. J. Spurlock in memory of Shiolene, who lost her life in the flood of 1937

Come Unto Me, donated by Mr. A. M. McCaskie in loving memory of Mrs. McCaskie

Jesus in Gethsemane, donated by Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Hickman in memory of their parents

The Resurrection, donated by Mr. and Mrs. Fred Webster in loving memory of their son, Jack Webster;

The Ascension , donated by the Crusade Class in honor of Mr. John McQuaid

Jesus Knocking at the Door, donated by Mr. & Mrs. E. S. Webster in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Connley

Alpha, (in Chapel), donated by Mr. & Mrs. E. G. Mick and Thermutis

Omega, (in Chapel), donated by Mr. & Mrs. Joe Ford

The Cross, (in Chapel), Donated by the Adult Bible Class in honor of Russell Lowther, Pastor

The Crown, (in Chapel) donated by Adult Bible Class in honor of Rev. M. B. Phillips,retired minister

The Harp, (at choir entrance) donated by Mr. & Mrs James Taylor and Janet Ann

Stained Glass, (in balcony) donated by Mr. & Mrs. Elgin Bias & Mr & Mrs. M. G. Deaton

Stained Glass, (on stairs to 2nd floor) donated by Sunday School in honor of E. E. Webster, general superintendent of Church School

The engraved plaques for each window are placed on the window sills and are not seen except when one is standing at the window looking down upon the window sill. The one exception to this is in the the chancel window where the plaque is mounted upon the wall beneath the window in the choir loft.

The Furnishings:

The furnishing in the Sanctuary and names of those who provided them are:

The Pulpit, provided by Mr. & Mrs. W. L. Ellis

Pulpit Chairs, provided by Mr. & Mrs. Russell Plymale

The Communion Table and Cross, provided by Duane McCoy

The Candlesticks, provided by Robert Webster

Offering Plates, provided by Intermediate Class

Offering Plates and Pulpit Scarf, given by Mr. & Mrs. Everett Jackson

The Bible Marker, provided by Gene Paul McCoy

In later years, 1960, during my second pastorate, the Crusade Class provided ***The Baptistery***, in loving memory of our beloved Son, Paul Lowther.

On suggestion of Dr. A. Hensel Fink, consulting architect for the General Board, who I mentioned earlier as being the one with whom the church steps had collapsed, we purchased an additional lot on Kentucky Street to provide more room for the new church. The lot was purchased for the sum of $400.00 from a Mr. Belville, who lived in Guyandotte. The parsonage was to be moved to that lot. A basement would be dug in the new lot and the parsonage moved over on it, leaving its previous lot for additional space for the new church.

Almost Divided Over The "Divided" Chancel, But Not Quite!

Everything was going beautifully in our work of designing the new church until one day a slight flair-up gave us a bit of concern. I had taken the blueprints of our plans to the home of Bishop U.V.W. Darlington, retired Methodist Bishop, whose interest and help I was trying to cultivate to strengthen our Building Program throughout the District and Conference. Bishop Darlington was a great man and most widely known and respected. It didn't hurt us any to have him on our side. When Westmoreland finally became a District Program, Bishop Darlington helped in our soliciting of funds by going to the Nightbert Memorial Church in Logan and also to the Church in Milton, where he preached and received offering for Westmoreland.

However, on this particular day I had gone to the Bishop's home to show him the blueprints of our plans for the New Church. The plans were scarcely unrolled before him until I realized that his eye had caught something that displeased him. He put his finger down on the Chancel Section of our plans and said: "Young man, what is this? Is this a Divided Chancel?" I told him that it was, and he began instantly to roll up the plans and handed them to me. He then told me that he wanted to see those plans again in two weeks and if at that time the Divided Chancel was still in our plans that he would withdraw his support from the Westmoreland Methodist Building Program. He said that he was a "Methodist" and that the traditional Methodist Pulpit was in the center of the Chancel!

I reported this incident to the Building Committee as soon as possible. It was evident that there were strong feelings regarding this and that I suggested to the committee that we did not have to decide the matter that night, that there were at least fifteen other things pressing for our decision; that we should take care of those things first and would come back later to the matter regarding the chancel. The Committee was meeting every night and we would come back later to the matter regarding the chancel. The Committee was willing to do this, and so a serious division was avoided.

The next day in great distress I went to see Mr. Tucker, our architect. He came up with the suggestion that saved the day. He said that he could redesign the chancel in such a way that it would provide a center pulpit for the time being, but which could at any time in the future be easily converted into a Divided Chancel with a minimum of expense and effort. This seemed like a good idea, and the committee accepted it. When we finally came to Opening Day in the New Church, Bishop Darlington would bring the message from the Center Pulpit that he wanted, so he would be happy. As far as I know nobody was hurt over the matter, Come to think of it, wouldn't it have been ridiculous and ironical of if we had become "Divided" over a "Divided Chancel?

-How, Why, When-

Westmoreland Became A Project Of The Huntington District

While there had been much talk throughout The Huntington District that The Westmoreland Methodist Building Program was a project of the District, it was not until a brief time before the ground breaking that the program was adopted by the District. And even then, after the official adoption, it was considerable time before any help was received or anything done regarding Westmoreland on a district level. Had it not been for the kindness and brotherly spirit of Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston, then pastor of Johnson Memorial Methodist Church, nothing may ever have been done about Westmoreland on a District level. I will explain how this came about, but first let me give a brief background that is necessary to understand the situation.

Before the project had become a district program; and long before any help was provided by the other churches of the district, the little Westmoreland Methodist Church with only 65 members, had paid off its indebtedness on and dedicated its parsonage; it had then put on a financial campaign for funds to build a new church and had raised $19,000.00 for this purpose. The first contribution toward a new church had been by the local WSCS which had pledged $500.00. The campaign was then started in the local community and the WSCS then added $1,000.00 more to its original donation. All of this had taken place long before any contributions came from the other churches in the district, or from the Board of Missions, or from any other source outside of the local Westmoreland Methodist Church!

Highest Per-Capita Giving In Our Conference!

The Westmoreland Methodist Church, with it's 65 loyal Methodists, had the highest per capita giving of any local church in the West Virginia Conference. This fact came out later in the program through studies that were made by Dr. Kenaston. This was one factor which, together with many other considerations, finally led the Huntington District and the Board of Missions to give us a hand in our building efforts at Westmoreland.

At one time during the program every full member of the Westmoreland Methodist Church was pledged to, and making regular payments on, five different pledges as follows:

(1) General Fund for current expenses and Conference Benevolences;
(2) The Building Fund;
(3) The Crusade For Christ, (the current quadrennial program), our apportionment was $337), and the church paid $511.00,
(4) The Reserve Pension Fund apportionment was $1,878.00 and $1,371 was paid;
(5) Each member had a pledge to his class in the church which had made a pledge to the building fund, WSCS, and MYF, etc.

Is it any wonder that the late Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston, in speaking of the Westmoreland Church, referred to it as ***The Heroic Little Westmoreland Methodist Church***? It was that for certain! I know, for I was there at the time. Believe me, I know all about it! The Westmoreland Methodist folks might easily have said at that time: "Don't ask me for a pledge on the Pension Fund for ministers, or for the Quadrennial Fund, or for anything else, for we've got all we can handle, our building is falling down and we are in big trouble, etc."

However, when our campaign was over in the local community, we had raised $19,000.00 which was commendable for such a few people. But it would not meet the need for a church building which the community needed. With this amount of money we couldn't hope to build even a small wayside prayer chapel. Our survey had revealed that there were fifty-seven new homes then under construction and with a potential of fifteen hundred more that would be built later. The success of the flood wall in keeping out the Ohio River at flood stage had been established and there was no doubt that the Westmoreland Community would grow in the future by leaps and bounds. An adequate church edifice to meet this growing community was needed, not just a wayside prayer chapel that could be provided with only $19,000.00.

The Slough Of Despond!

The dilemma which we faced now was almost as bad as the one we had struggled with over the mortgage on the parsonage. Meeting after meeting was held and the debate of the matter grew more intense as time went on. Prayers were offered for guidance; tears were shed; sometimes tempers flared! Ideas on what to do ranged all the way from trying to put a new foundation under the little white church to building on additional rooms.

One night we seemed to have reached a complete impasse. Mention was made again of the possibility of help from the District, or Conference, or Board of Missions. But one of the trustees who had been in the church since it was first organized, recounted how they had been promised help a few years before in the paving debt on Auburn Road, but they never came through with the help: then they had promised help if they would buy the parsonage, and not a dollar of help had been received. It was here that I heard for the first time the saying "why don't they put their money where their mouth is?" As the meeting broke up that evening, we were all more deeply in "The Slough of Despond" than we had experienced in the whole program to that date. No one slept that night! We were back and forth on the phone to each other until well after mid-night.

The next morning, and in sheer desperation, I went to the office of Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston, pastor at Johnson Memorial. I had been to the District Superintendent's office so many times and had received no helpful suggestions, that I didn't feel that there was any need on this day to go back to him. Rather I would go on this day to the man whom I regarded as the most influential minister in the Huntington District. Busy as he was, Dr. Kenaston listened to my tale of woe. He then told me not to worry about it for he knew there was indeed sentiment in the district favoring the making of Westmoreland a District project. All it needed was for someone to start the ball rolling. He told me that he would go to the next session of the Huntington District Conference,

which was soon to be held, and would make a motion to that affect. He was sure they would vote favorably!

When Dr. Kenaston told me this it lifted what seemed like tons of weight from my shoulders and I suddenly lost all of the weariness with which I had come into his office. The ultimate success of the program was assured then and there and I knew it! Dr. Kenaston was a man of tremendous influence in Huntington and if he favored this program becoming a District Project with all the churches to help in a financial way, it would be done. Dr. Kenaston was a man of his word and I knew that he would not go back on his word.

I was overwhelmed with delight and feelings of gratitude, joy and confidence, and hastened back to Westmoreland to spread the word. This lifted the Westmoreland people also out of their Slough of Despond for they too had great confidence that Dr. Kenaston would do what he promised, even if others had not.

Huntington District Officially Adopted Westmoreland Building Program, May 7, 1946

True to his word as always, Dr. Kenaston presented the cause of The Westmoreland Methodist Building Program to the District Conference which was in session at The Highlawn Methodist Church, May, 7, 1946. He gave a report on what our local church had done to advance the building program and pointed out that the Westmoreland Church, at that time, had the highest per-capita giving of any church in the entire Conference. He made reference to the congregation having already had a campaign, raising $19,000.00 toward their new church. He pointed out facts regarding the growing community and said that it would be indeed a "crying shame" if the Methodist Church in the Huntington District of the Methodist Church would let a golden opportunity go by to build an adequate church ediface in Westmoreland and be ready to serve the needs of the growing community.

At the end of his lecture, Dr. Kenaston made the motion that the Huntington District of the Methodist Church officially adopt the Westmoreland building program. It was put to a vote, and as I recall it was unanimous! Everyone in favor of the motion was to stand up, and the whole Conference came to its feet. At that time I had the satisfaction of writing this into the records of the District Conference, for I was at that time, the Secretary of the Conference. You may well imagine that I never wrote anything into the record book that gave me so much joy, and inspiration!

Many of my friends have asked why I had not presented the Westmoreland Program myself to the District Conference and possibly long before the date of May 7, 1946? The main reason was that I had been elected to serve as the President of The Huntington District Methodist Ministers' Association, and was also the Secretary of the District Conference. If I had presented the Westmoreland Program to the District Conference myself, many could have said that I was using my office to promote my own cause and in my own interest. The program would in all probability have been voted down. Therefore it was necessary that we have someone else make the presentation. What more competent person could we have found than Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston? If anyone could succeed in getting our program adopted by the District he could! And, as I have said, he surely did!

Doctor Kenaston To The Rescue A Second Time!

If we had thought that our worries and anxiety were over after the District had officially adopted our building program at westmoreland, we were wrong! We were not out of the woods yet by any means!

A whole month had gone by since the Huntington District had taken its official action at the District Conference and we had heard nothing more about it. As far as we knew nothing was being done anywhere in the district in the interest of Westmoreland. We waited anxiously! We were beginning to feel that the action taken by the District was just another resolution "on paper" only, and represented "good will" toward us, but with no practical help. Our people at Westmoreland were becoming depressed again! Some of them told me, "I told you so! It is just like it has always been, "promises, promises and nothing more!" In desperation again I went to the office of Dr. Kenaston. As always he had words of encouragement and hope. He told me that he would start the ball rolling himself, that possibly other churches were waiting to see what he and Johnson Memorial were going to do, since it was the largest church in the district and also since he had been the one who presented the Westmoreland Program at the District Conference.

Johnson Memorial Finance Committee Came To Visit Westmoreland - June 9, 1946

On the afternoon of June 9, 1946 Dr. Kenaston came to visit Westmoreland, bringing with him his Finance Committee. He had asked me to be present with my charts, graphs, drawings, pictures and be generally prepared to answer any questions which the committee might ask regarding the program. It was indeed a most important occasion and if ever in the history of the whole program I tried to be on the ball, it was that day. Dr. Kenaston's Finance Committee was larger than my whole congregation and included some of the most influential people in the City of Huntington, such as B. C. McGinnis, Sr., Mr. Earl Prior, and others. I knew that this was indeed to be a most decisive day in the history of The Westmoreland Building Program!

The meeting went well that day. The next day, June 10th., Dr. Kenaston called to tell me that the committee had decided favorably and would make its official report to The Board of Stewards at Johnson Memorial later that week. He told me that I should attend that board meeting and be ready to answer any questions which might be raised in the Board. At this meeting there was only brief debate on the recommendation of the Finance Committee, and the Board also voted favorably.

Westmoreland Day At johnson Memorial - July 7, 1946

Dr. Kenaston, soon after the meeting of The Official Board, announced that a special Westmoreland Day would be held at Johnson Memorial on Sunday, July 7, 1946. He asked all members and friends of the Johnson Memorial Church to make a special effort to be in attendance on this day and to bring their check book for a special free-will offering for the ***heroic little Westmoreland Methodist Church.*** He had this announcement in the headlines of the paper, broadcast over Radio Station WSAZ, and posters put up in various places throughout the city. It was well advertised. Dr. Kenaston was chided by many people who told him that there would be a very small crowd on Westmoreland Day because he had emphasized that special financial solicitation was going to be made. But Dr. Kenaston took all of this in his stride, and he had the last laugh, so to speak. A tremendous crowd came to the church that day, and chairs had to be placed in the isles in the sanctuary. ***The Offering That Day For Westmoreland Was $10,131.31 And Of This Amount Over $3,000.00 Was In Cash!!!***

How Westmoreland Building Program Was Promoted In The District

Following Westmoreland Day at Johnson Memorial, the Huntington District support of the program shifted into high gear. Publicity through local newspapers helped, together with letters and information which I sent through the mail. I had not known until after Westmoreland Day at Johnson Memorial, (which had taken place two months to the day from the date of our district conference at which it had been officially made a district project) that I was to be in complete charge of the program on a district level. If I had known this earlier, much valuable time could have been saved and also probably much more money could have been raised, but alas, I did not know it! I had expected that the district superintendent would appoint his own special district organization to carry forward the work, knowing that at Westmoreland I already had my hands full!

Anyway, I now wrote a letter to each pastor, reporting on the results of Westmoreland Day at Johnson Memorial, and suggesting that each pastor and his officials, should determine themselves the way in which the program would be presented to their churches, that there were no "cut & dried" procedures and no apportionments, that the whole matter was to be a freewill effort on the part of each church.

Several alternate ways of presentation that they might possibly desire to choose from were outlined and enclosed with the letter, mimeographed reports, questions and answers, and other items of information were enclosed. In the letter to the pastors, I told them that I would come personally to appear before their Official Board, or any other group in their church, to present the cause of Westmoreland. If they desired, I would be glad to preach on Sunday Morning or Evening, and present the cause to the whole congregation. The Congregation a Westmoreland allowed me to be absent any time I needed to be to present the cause.
Retired ministers would fill in for me and conduct my services at our local church. In my letter I also invited the

pastors to bring a committee from their church to visit Westmoreland and to see first hand what the program involved.

We had a busy time! The phone rang constantly! Our correspondence was enormous, as we tried to answer questions, give reports, acknowledge contributions, and set up meetings at the various churches throughout the District.

Meanwhile, back at the Parsonage, ***Catherine was doing everything she could to help*** and she deserves much credit, possibly far more than she has ever received. There were many times, when the program really got rolling, that she would spend the whole night until daylight, turning the duplicator or addressing letters. She was all the secretary I had, and she did a marvelous job!

The thing that put the double high pressure on us at the time was that we had not known earlier that we were to be in charge of the program in the district. If we had only known this earlier, perhaps we could have been a little better organized and prepared for what was coming. But the District Superintendent had said nothing to us about it. In fact, as I've indicated earlier, we did not know about this until after Westmoreland Day at Johnson Memorial, on July 7th. The momentum of the District Program was on suddenly from that occasion and all the newspaper publicity. We didn't dare to hesitate, but had to "strike while the iron was hot!" Any hesitation on our part at that time would have run the district phase of the program into the ground. We did everything that we could to avoid any delay. Very often we would be writing letters at 3:00 o'clock in the morning and then when they were written, I would drive them all the way to the uptown Post Office in order to get them on their way a few hours earlier. It was a strenuous, difficult and exciting time! But it was also a Happy and inspirational time! We are so glad it happened! ***It was, as we now know after 30 years, the crowning achievement of our Entire Ministry!***

Contributions From The Churches

Contributions ranged all the way from $10,131.31 down to $10.00. On April 8, 1948, a few days after we had Opening Day in our New Church, I made the following report on contributions:

NAME OF CHURCH	AMOUNT PLEDGED
Accoville Claypool	$ 10.00
Bown Charge	$ 13.27
Bridge Street	$ 10.00
Beverly Hills	$ 750.00
Barboursville	$ 300.00
Clifton Mason	$ 55.00
Central Methodist	$ 300.00
Emmanuel	$ 500.00
First Methodist	$ 5,100.00
First Avenue	$ 18.00
Highlawn	$ 241.00
Hurricane	$ 14.00
Huntington Charge	$ 10.00
Johnson Memorial	$10,131.31
Nighbert Memorial	$ 505.00
Main Street	$ 43.00
Milton	$ 547.00
Man	$ 149.00
Point Pleasant Charge	$ 20.44
Point Pleasant Trinity	$ 100.00
Peach Creek	$ 22.25
Riverview	$ 13.50
South Side	$ 153.00
West Hamlin	$ 26.00
General Board of Missions	$ 5,000.00
Conference Board of Missions	$ 2,500,00

A Summary of the contributions is to be written later when I write about the final campaign that paid off remaining indebtedness on the New Church in February, 1949.

Ground Breaking - June 1, 1947

As soon as the Westmoreland project had officially become a District Project, plans for the building were adjusted accordingly by our architect, Mr. Albert F. Tucker, and our Building Committee, which was headed by Mr. Russell Plymale, Chairman, Mr. Tucker then went to work on the working drawings! In the meanwhile we went to work on the problem of securing necessary building permits. This was by no means an easy matter. For, although the war was over, "V-E Day" having occurred on May 7, 1945, followed by "V-J Day" four months later, government regulations governing construction had not been entirely released. In fact, in the interest of National Security, the National SecurityAct came into being in 1947 and the post-war period was, in many ways, a most difficult time in which to build. Securing permits and materials needed was a most difficult matter, as we at Westmoreland surely found out. We had made application for a building permit in July of 1946, soon after Westmoreland Day had been held at Johnson Memorial Church. We had applied through the Civilian Production Administration and also through the City of Huntington. What a fight we put on to secure the permit to build a new church. Our first application to C.P.A. came back marked "Denied" and with instructions that we should apply every three months. It wasn't until February 19, 1947 that we were able to obtain the permit to build. When the permit was finally issued, they sent a yellow poster about a foot square with instructions that it must be posted at the scene of construction. Incidentally, when the new church was completed, I took down the poster and I wrote across it with a black crayon: "Heavenly Days, what we had to go through to get this! Remember?" Little did I realize that Catherine, who kept a most voluminous scrap book, would also keep that yellow poster to laugh about in years to come. I have it before me now as this is being written in December 1975!

Ground breaking ceremonies conducted on June 1, 1947, was one of the happiest days of our little congregation. The first shovel full of earth was turned appropriately by Mr. E. S. Webster, who had been Superintendent of the Church School at Westmoreland for many years! Incidentally, as this is being written (December 1975) he still is serving as Church School Superintendent! This must be a record! The Huntington Herald Dispatch, dated June 2, 1947, reported on one of the happiest days of our little congregation and inluded pictures of the ground breaking ceremonies. Those in the picture assisting in the turning of the soil are Mr. Russell Plymale, Chair of our Building Committe, Dr. T. M. Zumbrunnen, District Superintendent, and myself.

Incidentally, a humorous thing occurred that day which has nothing to do with the serious part of this writing, but might bring a laugh or two. On that day, I was dressed in a very light suit and was obviously rushing the season as it was a very cool day. I naturally wanted to make a good impression somehow and be noticed. Anyway, the first person to notice me was Bishop U. V. W. Darlington, who saw me when I came around the corner of the church building from the parsonage. He made a big to do about it, and shouted at me loudly to go back, "go back"! Everyone began to laugh and then the Bishop apologized in a voice that everyone could hear, "Excuse me, brother Lowther, I thought you had forgot to dress and was coming out here where all these people would see you in your pajamas!" With that, the whole congregation standing around in the church yard laughed loudly.!

Speaking of the picture that appeared in the paper that day, I can recognize Mrs. Fred Bowe, Mrs. William Humphries; Mr. M. R. Burchett; Mr. Wellman, father of Mrs. H T. Tucker; Mr. Taylor bing; Danny Webster; Mr. Fred Webster; Mr. Rayndol Riggs; Dr. J. S. Richardson; Dewayne Lowther (holding a camera); Mrs. Elgin Bias and there are many others in the background who we do not recognize. It was a most happy, inspirational, and exciting day and long to be remembered!

Moving The Parsonage And The Church

Following ground breaking ceremonies, things really began to move, "literally!" The new church was to occupy the lots upon which the parsonage and old church had stood. Therefore both had to be moved. Both the parsonage and the old church would be moved to the new lot which we had purchased on Kentucky Street. The parsonage would remain permanently upon the front of this new lot and the old church would be placed o a temporary foundation on the back of the same lot to remain there as a place of worship until the new church construction was completed.

The Parsonage was moved first. It was decided that since it was so very, very small, with no upstairs or basement, and being only four small rooms, that we would dig a basement on the new lot and then move the parsonage over it. In digging this basement, the dirt from it was piled up in front of the parsonage, for we knew that in a few days the parsonage would be moved over the basement and away from the dirt pile. Pictures which Catherine has in her scrap book clearly show that the dirt pile was much larger than the house, and standing on Kentucky Street looking toward the parsonage, one could not see the house!

It was quite an experience for me and my family to be living in the little parsonage while it was being moved. Some interesting things happened during this process. One day, Dr. Zumbrunnen, the District Superintendent, came to see us. In order to get up into the house, one had to climb up some heavy boards across which cleats had been nailed. The house, of course, had been moved away from it's front steps and when Dr. Zumbrunnen came up these boards he lost his balance and fell out into the yard, papers and notes which he had in his shirt pocket went flying through the air. He said that he didn't know that he was going to have to "walk the plank" when he came to see us. He also said that this experience reminded him of the chicken house back at his grandmother's farm. It had just such an arrangement for the chickens to go in and out and that there had been one old red rooster that was so old that he couldn't always make it and sometimes fell back on the ground. I wanted to laugh out loud, but wasn't sure whether I dare to do that!

We had asked people to haul away the dirt to fill in their lawns. One day as I sat in the parsonage looking out over the mountain of dirt piled up in the front door, I heard voices and went around the other side of the dirt pile to see who was doing the talking. A man and his small son, about 12 years of age, were loading their truck. It turned out to be a Mr. Bourner. The boy's name was Frank. I became good friends with Frank and invited him to come to Sunday School and be in Dewayne's class which was called The Junior Pilots Class, taught by Mrs. Gene Hickman. Dewayne and Frank were about the same age. The following summer I took them to their first Methodist Conference Youth Camp. The boys are now both prominent ministers in the Conference. Our Son, Dewayne is the Secretary of the West Virginia Conference, and Frank is currently serving as pastor at Glen Dale. The Westmoreland church is Frank's Home Church and in a sense of the word it is Dewayne's home church also, although, being a minister's son, and moving from place to place he doesn't have a "home church" in the ordinary sense of the word.

My own remarks about the parsonage being moved with me and my family living in it was that as a Methodist Minister I had already moved a time or two and would probably move several more times in my life, but this was the first and probably the last time that I would ever be moved "before conference and taking my parsonage with me." Also, I remarked that this was probably the shortest move I would ever make (about 40 or 50 feet).

But we will never forget that little parsonage, which in later years was named "The Minnie B. Cottage". We lived in it altogether seven years; five years during the first pastorate while we were building the church, and then again two more years during our second pastorate or until we purchased the beautiful and spacious parsonage at 3702 Auburn Road.

While the church was being built we had Sunday School classes every Sunday in our parsonage! one bed room was used as the nursery, the Adult Bible Class met in the basement, and the Young Adult Class met in our living room. In fact, it was there in the living room of the parsonage that the Young Adult Class was first organized and named the "Crusade Class", being named after the current Quadrennial Program known as "The Crusade For Christ.

During the building of a basement in the parsonage, a serious mistake had been made by the contractor. During the pouring of the concrete in the basement floor, the forman in charge had visited a local tavern and had too much to drink. When the basement was about half poured, there was a long delay of several hours before the other half was poured. The concrete in the two sections did not bond, and thereafter water came through the floor, and, try as we may, we were never able to stop it.

The Adult Bible Class met each Sunday Morning in the basement of the little parsonage, and many times there would be as much as one inch of water over the entire basement floor. But this didn't stop the class from their regular class session. Members simply put on their boots and went on with their class. I think this was the greatest demonstration of devotion and determination that I have ever seen on the part of a Sunday School Class.

The Crusade Class of Young adult members, met in the living room of the little parsonage and about half of the class would have to stand during the class session, for there was no room to place chairs for all of the class. As I mentioned earlier, the class was first organized here in the parsonage and named for the quadrennial program in Methodism known as "The Crusade for Christ". There were so many fine young adult people there; I remember especially Bill and Helen Humphreys, who were daughter and son-in-law of Mr. & Mrs. John McQuaid, and many others whose names will appear at various times in these memories which I write about.

The Nursery for the Children was held each Sunday in our bedroom at the little parsonage attic. Classes for all other children of the Sunday School were held in what was left of the Old Church Building which was placed on a temporary foundation at the back of the parsonage lot during the construction of our new church! ***My Office and Study was also in our bedroom at the parsonage during construction of the new church! I kept my papers, files, notes, etc. on a piece of plywood on the floor. When it was not being used, I would push it back under the bed. It was bedlam on Sunday mornings***. We had to get up early, and get ready for a hectic day. But we were all inspired and happy, for we could see progress being made in the construction of our new church!

Dewayne & Paul slept in the attic of the little parsonage most of the time. We had installed a disappearing stairs and put up a bed in the attic. If the weather was not too hot or too cold, Dewayne & Paul would sleep there. However, the opening for the stairs was directly above the floor furnace, which was the only heat in the house. When the stairs were pulled down, all the heat from the furnace would go up into the attic making the attic too hot and at the same time cooling off the house. Also it was a real fire hazard, for if fire broke out, there was no way out! We worried constantly about this. Paul was not strong enough to go up and down the stairs by himself, and I have memories of seeing Dewayne going up or down those stairs, which was nothing more than a ladder with level steps, carrying Paul on his back! Paul was then about five years old and suffering from congenital heart trouble. Dewayne was about 12 years old.

When the parsonage was safely on its new foundation on the adjacent lot, we turned to the business of moving the old church. The church had to be moved back to the same lot upon which the parsonage had been moved and would occupy a temporary place behind the parsonage and be used for worship until the new church could be moved.

When we were finally ready to move the building the church-school rooms broke away from the main building and could not be moved. One section of the class rooms that was not in the way of the first phases of the new building were boarded up and turned into a tool-shed and a kind of office for the use of Mr. Asa Garland, who was our superintendent of construction. This was fortunate in a way, for it saved us the time and expense of building a tool shed. It was a horrible looking sight for a few months, but it served it's purpose.

Anyway, at long last the old church was safely in a temporary foundation made of cross ties on the lot behind the parsonage and it was quite an experience for all of us as we assembled in it for worship for the next several months while the church was being built. One could feel the building swing and sway as people came in and out. Sometimes, especially when it was real windy, one would have the sensation of being on board a ship riding on the waves at sea. Two funerals were conducted in the church while it was on it's temporary foundation, Mr. Joseph C. Rickett and Mr. P. D. Plymale. Mr. Plymale was the father of Mr. Plymale, who served as Chairman of our Building Committee for the New Church. Anyway, as the saying is "Where there is a will there is a way!". ***Westmoreland people had the will, the faith, the love and the vision necessary to cope with the most difficult of circumstances and to triumph over them to provide for the building of their New Church!***

The legal papers that were executed and other procedures involved in dealings with the Bank, Board of Missions, City of Huntington, Civilian Production Administration, the State Workman's Compensation Agency, etc. was voluminous and almost unbelievable.

In order to save money for the church I was serving, not only as Secretary of the church, but also as "The Clerk of the works" for the Building Program. I had a lot to learn regarding legal matters. At one time I had become so involved in it that someone made the observation that I was beginning to talk more like a lawyer than a preacher.

Anyway, in all the proceedings I did the best I could, and maintained adequate records of all that transpired. I kept two carbon copies of letters, reports, and have, therefore, carbon copies of letters, reports and so forth, which are of great interest to me as I look back across the years and think about what happened.

It would, of course, require a much larger volume than I am presently intending to write to tell of all the procedures that came up, but suffice it to say that a copy of one typical letter that I have in my files should give at least some idea of what was involved, especially if one can read between the lines:

June 21, 1948
Mr. Duncan Daugherty, First Huntington National Bank Building, Huntington, West Virginia

Dear Mr. Daugherty - Enclosed are the following papers needed to execute the Mortgage of our Local Church in the amount of $23,000 in favor of the Twentieth Street Bank:

(1) Copy of the NOTICE of such action which was read at public services in our church on the following Sundays: May 16, 28, and 30th;
(2) Copy of Resolution passed by our Board of Trustees and Board of Stewards and sent to the Board of Missions' requesting postponement of their liens;
(3) Copy of Postponement of Lien from Division of Home Missions and Church Extension of The Board of Missions and Church Extension of The Methodist Church to Westmoreland Methodist Church;
(4) Copy of postponement of Lien from the Board of Church Extension of The Methodist Episcopal Church South to the Westmoreland Methodist Church;
(5) Tax receipts, showing that the flood wall tax mentioned against us in the abstract, has been paid;
(6) Complete abstracts of Title to all property owned by our Local Westmoreland Methodist Church.

One additional Postponement of Lien will be received when the Conference Board of Missions meets on July 21st. This is the amount of $2,500.00, and the 20th Street Bank is willing for the Mortgage to be drawn without it. I presented a letter to the Bank which satisfied them that the Conference Board of Missions will grant a postponement of this particular lien at its next meeting.

Sincerely,
Russell Lowther, Pastor

It complicated matters and was also quite embarrassing to have gone through all the formalities and procedures necessary to obtain a donation of $5,000.00 from The General Board, and a donation of $2,500 from the Conference Board, fulfilling all mortgage and trust agreements necessary to keep within the law of the church and then having to go back to those same Boards requesting Postponement of their liens so that we would be able to give First Mortgage to our bank where we were borrowing money to keep the construction going. It seems almost humorous as we look back upon it from retirement days. But that's the way it was and as the saying is "It took a bit of doing," including some midnight oil.

With the General Board, our correspondence was with W. Vernon Middleton, Executive Secretary and with C. A. Richardson, Superintendent of the Department of City Work of the Board, and also with H. C. Leonard and with A. Ancel Fink, the latter of whom reviewed our plans for the new church and made helpful suggestions. With The Conference Board our correspondence was with Rev. A. E. Tulloh, who was then secretary of the Section on Church Extension. Our correspondence with The General Board of The Former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was with Dr. W. V. Cooper, the Executive Secretary.

Incidentally, it was a matter of curious interest that, although unification of the three great branches of Methodism had occurred in 1939, about ten years before this date, yet we found it necessary to write to The General Board of Missions and Church Extension of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Our correspondence was with Dr. W. V. Cooper, the Executive Secretary, 1115 Fourth Avenue, Louisville 3, Kentucky. Many letters were exchanged between us, the reasons for them are reflected in the last one that I received from him, which follows:

June 17, 1948
Rev. Russell Lowther, 261 Kentucky Street, Huntington, West Virginia

Dear Brother Lowther: I have your letter of June 14, enclosing a new Subordination Agreement which am today executing and returning to you along with the check for $1.00, which you so kindly enclosed. We do not make any charge for this service.

Very Sincerely yours,
W. V. Cooper, Executive Secretary.

Incidentally, as a matter of interest and history, liens against the local Church, held by the General Board of Missions of the M. E. Church, South, was for the amount of $1,500.00, dated March 11, 1927 and for $200.00 dated June 22, 1929. The money had been borrowed originally for purposes of paying the paving cost on Auburn Road and also on Bradley Road where a lot was owned by the church. ***Some of the original amount borrowed had been needed in the building of The Little White Church, and to pay for obligations that had been made in the building.*** As older members of the Westmoreland Church will recall, many of the vital records of the little church were lost forever in the tragic Flood of 1937. This matter regarding the liens which came out in our legal procedures in 1948 are more or less valuable as establishing the near ***date of the building of the first little Westmoreland Methodist Church.***

My Favorite Westmoreland Story - "Now Is The Time"

As we have already described, there was great difficulty in securing a permit to build. By the same token, we had the problem of securing materials which we needed and to have them on the grounds when they were needed. This situation gave rise, at one point, to one of the most fascinating experiences which came through the whole Westmoreland Building Program.

The huge "L" shaped basement for the church had been dug for both wings of the building and the walls had been raised with cinder-block and brick up to a point representing the top of the basement windows. But nothing else could be done until the steel window sash for the basement were in place. The sash had been ordered several weeks before from a company in St. Louis. But the shipment for some reason had not arrived! This gave us great concern!

One Friday afternoon, Mr. Asa Garland, superintendent of construction, explained that if he brought the gang of brick layers out on the following Monday and there was no steel window sash, there wouldn't be any thing at all that they could do, but that we would have to pay them for the whole day anyway. He didn't think we would want to do that, and yet, if he let the brick layers go on that Friday evening, we would not be able to get them back after they had gone to work somewhere else. What did I want him to do? We both felt that it was very unlikely that the shipment of steel window sash would arrive on the week end. I told Mr. Garland not to let the men go, for there was always a chance, however slim, that the delivery would arrive on Saturday. On Saturday, afternoon, I was out walking around in the church yard, thinking what a shame it was that, after all we had been through to get the construction going, the progress was going to be ended, and this would possibly mean a delay of months before we could get it going again. I was surely having one of my down hours! But suddenly an old green panel truck belonging to the Frickie Bakery Company, pulled over to the curb in front of the church and parked. Out jumped brother John McQuaid, a member of the church who worked for the bakery. You would have to have known this dear old man to fully appreciate and understand what took place! He was literally a man of faith, who really was sincere and who loved everybody including his enemies, if he had any, and I am sure he had none! In memory, I can see him now as he came toward me across the church yard, waving his old green cap in one hand, a smile on his face and starting to address me in his usual excited way, he exclaimed: "Ah, Brother Lauder" now's the time! now's the Time! (he never could pronounce my name but always called me "Brother Lauder"! But I told him he was mistaken this time, that ***now wasn't the time*** at all, that our church building program was in big trouble! I then told him about the problem regarding the steel window sash.

"Ah, brother Lauder," he said, "don't worry, the good Lord will take care of that, you'll see. You know what to do when you get into trouble, don't you? Sure you do! You just do the best you can and you pray and then turn it all over to the Lord! You'll see! The Lord wants us to build this church and he ain't going to let anything happen to it now. Now's the Time, Now's the time!"

At brother McQuaid's insistence, we went out back into the little church and went down to the Altar and had a prayer together, asking the Lord to see to it that we received the shipment of steel window sash in time for work Monday Morning. Brother McQuaid literally turned the whole matter over to the Lord. After the prayer he got up and shook hands with me and said: ***"Now's the time, brother Lauder, we have turned the matter over to The Lord, and he will handle it, you'll see! You don't have to worry no more about this. Your steel window sash will be here in plenty of time, you'll see!"***

At church the next morning, brother McQuaid came to me and said: "Now's The Time", brother, Lauder, just keep-a-trustin" - the sash will be here in plenty of time for work tomorrow!" I thought of how ridiculous it was for me to keep watching and expecting some truck drivers who had worked hard all week to give up their Sunday to bring a load of window sash to Huntington for the Westmoreland Methodist Church. I finally considered that I had been expecting that they might possibly do that since Brother McQuaid had trusted it all to the Lord and said that it would happen. But now it was after mid-night! I gave up and went to bed, feeling that our hope for the steel sash before working hours on Monday was all in vain. I lay awake a long time, wondering what I should say to brother McQuaid in a case like this; he had been so sure that The Lord would handle the situation. ***You may well imagine the excitement when, at about 3:00 o'clock in the morning, (Monday Morning), we were awakened at the parsonage by a roar out in the church yard, and raising the window shade we saw a beautiful sight, a great truck loaded with steel window sash had parked on Kentucky Street!*** I ran to the door to invite the drivers in for a cup of coffee, and as I did so I looked across the field toward the home of brother McQuaid on Illinois Street. I saw a light come on and someone at the window. I knew that brother McQuaid was looking out at the answer to his prayer, and I could just imagine that I heard him saying: "Ah, brother Lauder, Now's the Time, Now's the Time, I told you that you would see"! The drivers of the truck came into the parsonage for coffee and told us that never in all their experiences in driving truck had they come upon anything like they had experienced on that trip with our steel window sash. They had intended to stop, not once, but time after time. But each time they would arrive at a place to stop something kept urging them on. It was uncanny! They just couldn't understand it. Well, when I told them about brother McQuaid and his prayer, they just sat there in silence looking at each other. I am sure that those men, if they didn't have faith in God before, surely must have it now!

Laying Of The Cornerstone - September 7, 1947

"Therefore, thus saith the Lord, behold I lay in Zion a Foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation." Isaiah 28; 16

The cornerstone laying in the New Westmoreland Methodist Church occurred on September 7, 1947, with services planned throughout the day. At the Morning Service, Dr. T. M. Zumbrunnen, District Superintendent preached the sermon. Dr. F. S. Pollitt, beloved retired minister who had meant so much to the little congregation, was on hand to Christen eighteen children, being assisted by Reverend M. B. Phillips, another retired minister who was then teaching the Bible Class.

The main service of the day was held at 2:30 in the afternoon in order that ministers and laymen from other churches throughout the district might have an opportunity to be present. Prominent ministers and laymen participating in the program that day were: Bishop U. V. W. Darlington; Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston; Dr. A. E. Beckett; Rev. N. W. Castle; and Dr. F. S. Pollitt. The Lay Leader of the Huntington District, Mr. C. N. Fannin, was also present and participating. The local Westmoreland Congregation was represented by Mr. Russell Plymale, chairman of the Board of Stewards and Chairman of the Building Committee.

A large platform had been built up to the position of the cornerstone and as minister in charge, it fell my duty to place appropriate items in the copper box that was to be sealed behind the cornerstone in the building.

As The Large Crowd Looked On, I Placed The Following Items Into The Box:

(1) The names of all members of the Westmoreland Methodist Church, together with a listing of ..

(2) Names of all contributors to the payment of the parsonage debt and the names of all who had contributed to the Building Program

(3) The names of all of the officials of the local church. Trustees, Stewards, and all others in the officiary;

(4) A copy of each of three special editions of the Westmoreland Methodist News Paper, which I had edited during the program, and which contained a wealth of information;

(5) A copy of the Huntington Daily Newspaper;

(6) A copy of the Methodist Discipline for the current period of the building program;

(7) A Methodist Hymnal;

(8) A copy of the West Virginia Conference Minutes;

(9) A copy of Dr. Kenaston's Johnson Memorial Church Newspaper including special Westmoreland Edition;

(10) A copy of our Church Bulletin, together with special mimeographed reports on the building program:

After I had filled the copper box with these items, Dr. Arthur Beckett, seated nearby on the platform, remarked that he thought I was a good "packer upper" and said he wanted me to help him pack the next time he had to move. Anyway, after the copper box was filled with items I have mentioned, it was sealed with a torch by Mr. M. J. Flesher, who lived near the church on Auburn Road. The Cornerstone was then set in place in front of the box and the mason work was done by Mr. Ott Mills, one of the trustees of Westmoreland Church.

Children that were Christened on the day of The Laying of The Cornerstone were: Harold Franklin Pruitt, Cora Dean Pruitt, Janet ann Taylor, Joyce Gay Platt, James Leslie Patterson, Rebecca Sue Boardwine, Joseph Daniel Boardwine, Sharon Lynn Witham, Raynal Russell Riggs, Jr., Henry Clay Chapman, Sharon Eve Nixon, Kermit Vinson Nixon, Jr., Mary Judith Norris, Hazel Mae Norris, and Robert Williams Henderson.

Persons who were received into membership of the church on the day of the Laying of the Cornerstone were Mr. & Mrs. William Witham, Mr. & Mrs. James Daniel Boardwine, Mrs. Helen Leslie Patterson and Mrs. James Taylor.

Special Favors In Construction:

Following laying of the Cornerstone, progress of construction went forward rapidly, in spite of winter weather and other difficult factors. The Cornerstone laying had occurred on September 7, 1947. The following March 28, 1948 opening Day was observed. At least three months of this time had been in winter.

While it would be impossible to list all of the special favors the program received during construction from Huntington contracting firms, utility companies and other organizations that did much to help, I would like to make mention of two such favors as being typical of the consideration that were made in our effort to

build the new church: First was the courtesy of LeRoy Roberts Construction Company bringing their large crane to lift into place the giant wooden trusses that support the roof of the new church sanctuary. They had to be lifted high into the air before being placed in position on walls that had been built. Of course, without the crane this could not have been done. Mr. LeRoy Robert's wife had once been a member of the "Little White Church" and Mr. Roberts was happy for the opportunity to be of real service to the congregation in its effort to build a much needed new church. Some of the choice pictures in my wife's scrap book which she kept religiously during the program, are of the hugh trusses swinging in the air and being placed upon the walls of the sanctuary.

The second courtesy that was much appreciated was that of The Huntington Fire Department bring a large fire truck with extension ladders to helped place the large stained glass window over the chancel. Captain D. J. Queen and Mr. Tucker, were in charge of this service. The chancel window is approximately three times the size that it appears as you look at it from the street level. We have a picture of the workmen waiting for the fire truck to arrive. One of the men in the picture is lying comfortably in the space in the wall which was provided to receive the window.

And, speaking of Pictures, we are indebted to our son, Dewayne R. Lowther, who was something of a camera "bug" and took many pictures that are more valuable as time goes on. He was only 13 years old at the time of the laying of the Cornerstone but had already developed an interest in photography which would continue through the years even to the present time. He now has professional equipment and I doubt if there is any body around that knows more about this business than he knows. Others who took pictures of the laying of the corner stone included Fred Bowe, son-in-law of Mr. & Mrs. O. R. McCoy, who had played such a large role in the building of the church. Mrs. McCoy had served as president of the WSCS, the importance of which was discussed earlier in this writing; and Mr. McCoy served as president of the Board of Stewards and also Board of Trustees. Other pictures were taken by the News Photographer for the Huntington papers, and some of the pictures were given to us. Some of them were posted in the Social Hall of the Church and may yet be there.

The Last Service In The Little White Church. March 25, 1948

On Thursday evening of Holy Week, March 25, 1948, the last service of worship in ***"the little white church"*** was held. It was the service of Holy Communion. While nothing much was said about it, everyone knew as they came into the church that evening, that this was the last time they would ever be coming there to worship, for three days later, the New Church would be opened for services.

The little church had been a most sacred place. Around its little home-made altar, tears had been shed of both Joy and sorrow as the sacred marriage covenant was solemnized; children consecrated in Holy Baptism to God and the church; the forgiveness of sins experienced; the last rites said for loved ones who had departed this life to that "bourn from which no traveler returns, to that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens!"

Unlike most services of Holy Communion, the little congregation remained after the benediction for a great while in the little edifice that had served them since it was built in 1927. It was indeed a touching moment. Going out that evening through the alley past the new church building to Auburn Road, many glanced back over their shoulders for a last look at ***"the little white church"***. It stood there silently in the shadows of the great new church edifice within the walls of which the work would continue that had been started in the hearts of people in the little white church." While the little white church had served it's day and must pass on, it would never pass from memory of many who had gone to Sunday School & worshiped there in the little sanctuary.

The little church had been sold for $800.00 and the contract had stipulated that it must be removed quickly. There were people in Westmoreland who told me that they could not pass that way again until they knew that the little structure was gone, for they couldn't bear the thought of seeing it being razed.

Opening Day In The New Church - Easter Sunday, March 28, 1948

It was most appropriate indeed that progress on the building of our new church had been such that we were able to observe opening day on Easter Sunday, March 28 1948. How could we possibly have found a better, or more meaningful way, for observing "The Triumphant Entrance?"

The feelings of everyone in Westmoreland were well expressed by the Psalmist who once said: "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." Just how very glad everyone was could not be, of course, completely described in words. It was a day never to be forgotten. People throughout the community and the Huntington District were thrilled beyond words to express; everywhere people were saying, "Come! Let us go into the house of the Lord...let us enter into his courts with praise and Thanksgiving"!

Services were held on Sunday Morning and Evening that day and, since the building program had become a district program, special services celebrating the opening of the new church were arranged for a period of two weeks in order that every minister and layman throughout the district might have an opportunity to attend at least one service of celebration.

Bishop U. V. W. Darlington preached at the morning service on opening day and Dr. F. S. Pollitt assisted in the service, christening ten children. Dr. J. M. Helm, who in the meantime had become District Superintendent, succeeding Dr. T. M. Zumbrunnen, brought the message at the Evening Service.

Throughout the week at special services which were held, the following Methodist Ministers were present to bring the message: Dr. H. E. Kelso, pastor of Seventh Avenue; Rev. C. W. Ambrose, pastor of Ninth Avenue; Dr. J. Herbert Parks, pastor of Beverly Hills; , Rev. D. L. Snyder, pastor of Emmanuel; Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston, pastor of Johnson Memorial.

At the special services conducted the second week following opening day, the following ministers were present to bring the message: Rev. V. C. Cutright, Highlawn; Rev. M. W. Castle, Central; Rev. Howard Hall, Ceredo; Dr. A. E. Beckett, First Church, and Rev. W.A. Debarr, Guyandotte. Miss Joanna Sandmann served as organist for the special services and Mrs. J. T. Bing directed the choir. The choir presented The Cantata, "Hosanna", by Nolte on the afternoon after opening day. Services were broadcast by Huntington Station WSAZ.

An interesting and at the same time most humerous thing occurred on opening Day. That is the incident is humorous or serious, depending on how you look at it. Anyway, Bishop U. V. W. Darlington, who could always be depended upon to come up with the "unexpected," sat patiently within the chancel, along with myself and the District Superintendent and Dr. Pollitt. The Bishop was to bring the message. The service was progressing nicely through the responses, anthems, prayers, offertory, etc., when suddenly the Bishop got to his feet and walked over behind the pulpit and literally "took over the service". He announced to the congregation that he had come to preach! He said that at the rate things were going he wouldn't have time to bring his message, so I'll just preach right now," he said. He said that some of these other things that we were doing in the service could wait until another time. Well, if you knew Bishop Darlington, you know very well that no one made any effort to change his mind, but everyone sat quietly and listened to his sermon. As I recall, it was a good one.

Previously, I said that on Opening Day Dr. F. S. Pollitt, beloved retired minister, took part and among other things he Christened the following children: John Whitt Bentine, Steven Kent Modesitt, Carolyn Louise Bardall, Nancy Lee Gilmore, Brenda Joyce Clausen, Diana Kay Lycans, Danny Christy Clark, Shirley Jean Ponell, Jan Christi Hager and Janice Paulette Ponell.

I had requested Mr. Russell Plymale, Chairman of our Building Committee, to write a message for the Opening Day Issue of my Church Paper. He reluctantly did so. It was a good message and I would like to write it here as a part of The Westmoreland Story:

A Message For Opening By Russell C. Plymale

"We have broken the ground; we have laid the Cornerstone; we have designed and erected a beautiful building. This we have accomplished, not by ourselves as a building committee, but with the guidance and financial assistance of the entire community."

"We are fulfilling the desires and prayers of many a proud parent of a generation past, who have endeavored to carry out the command to go into the world and teach the truth of God. In our humble way we have tried to portray to the passing public our appreciation of all the good in life that God has revealed to us, in erecting to him a place suitable for his followers to convene."

"We are now asking you, our friends and neighbors, to join with us in our Opening Service that you too may receive the blessings of life as God accepts our dedication of this new Altar. We realize that our world today depends upon the Christians of today to carry the message of faith, love, courage and vision as did the early disciples of the Prince of Peace, and whether or not we can teach our generation to give to posterity the inheritance that is rightfully theirs. To this aim we dedicate ourselves, that the world will be more Christian by our having lived."

Finishing Construction After Opening Day

Although opening day had been observed on Easter Sunday, March 28, 1948, much remained to be done before the new building was completed. Among other things, only temporary walkways had been constructed around the church. These were yet to be replaced with concrete. The stairway to the third floor of the Educational Wing was yet to be replaced with concrete. The stairway to the third floor of the Educational Wing was yet to be completed. The inside of the class rooms were unfinished; cabinets had to be built in the kitchen; floors had to be sanded; ten new pews had to be purchased; a furnace had to be installed in the church school wing, etc.

The work of finishing the construction was done by volunteer labor and was supervised by our good layman, Mr. S. K. Brammell, a carpenter and cabinet maker par excellence. The hours of skilled labor that brother Brammell donated to the Westmoreland Methodist Church Building Program will never be forgotten. I never knew a more devoted layman in all my years as pastor.

Others who gave unreservedly of their time and skill to help finish the construction were Mr. W. L. Ellis and his son William T. Ellis, who had just returned from the services and volunteered to help. The list could go on and on. Suffice it to say that men from all walks of life, old and young, came at all hours and on Saturdays and Holidays and worked and worked! It was not uncommon to be awakened sometimes even after midnight, and hear pounding in the church as someone, having no other time that he could come but wanted to have part in the work, came to do his part.

In the light of these facts, one may be able to appreciate more the statement made by Bishop Vernon Middleton, who at that time was serving as the executive secretary of the General Board of Missions and Church Extension. Bishop Middleton said that he did not know of any local church building program in this country that had been as outstanding as the building of the Westmoreland Methodist Church. One of the three reasons for his statement, he said, was the size of our new building in relation to the amount of money that had been spent. Of course the reason for this had been the fact of so many local laymen donating their labor as well as their money.

Incidentally, the other two reasons for the good compliment of Bishop Middleton were that: (1) the number of people of many local churches going together to support the program, and (2) the building schedule, i.e., the rapidity of the building schedule from Ground Breaking to opening day. The Ground Breaking had taken place on June 1, 1947; The Cornerstone was laid September 7, 1947; The opening day was held on March 26, 1948. Dr. Middleton had thought that this was remarkable, not only from the fact that several months had been in the winter time, but also from the fact of the difficulty of getting building materials and supplies due to the effect that the War had upon the economy of the nation at that time.

Paying Final Indebtedness On The New Church

Soon after the new church was open for worship, March 28, 1948, help from other Methodist churches and from the General and Conference Boards of Missions and Church Extension, ceased. We were grateful for what outside sources had made possible, but we all realized that there was yet a distance to go before the final victory could be proclaimed.

A total indebtedness of $23,820.00 remained to be paid. In a letter to the congregation dated January 21, 1949, I enclosed a financial report on the building program which summarized the situation that existed at that date. That report should have a place in my present writing as it gives the answers to many questions that have been asked regarding the cost of the building, support from outside the community, local support, etc. The following is a copy of the report I made:

Report On Westmoreland Building Program As Of 1/21/49

Total cost of Church Building To Date:	$ 69,717.20
Amount Received:	
From Westmoreland Methodist Church	$ 19,078.27
From other churches in the District	$ 20,138.93
From West Virginia Conference Board of Missions	$ 2,500.00
From General Board of Missions	$ 5,000.00
Borrowed from 20th Street Bank	$ 23,000.00
Present Indebtedness:	
Balance due on loan from 20th St. Bank	$ 22,000.00
Balance due on paving of Kentucky Street	$ 460.00
Balance due on new organ	$ 1,340.00
Needed to complete building program:	
For heating unit for Church School Department	$ 1,500.00
For building permanent walkways & steps:	$ 1.000.00
For construction of Spiral on Tower	$ 800.00
Total Amount Needed To Pay All Indebtedness And Complete The New Building	$ 27,120.00

Dr. R. Morman Parker Asked To Direct Final Campaign February 7-12, 1949

Dr. R. Morman Parker, Executive Secretary of The Conference Board of Missions and Church Extension, was at this time, traveling throughout the Conference to local churches and directing financial campaigns that were most successful. We had heard of his great success in this work and decided to seek his services to direct Westmoreland in this final all-out campaign to pay the remaining indebtedness on our New Church. Fortunately, we were able to secure Dr. Parker's services and our campaign was held February 7 - 12, 1949. At that time the goal of our campaign was for the sum of $28,576.00 which included (in addition of the amount we needed for payment of our indebtedness, funds needed for furnishings, including ten new pews for the sanctuary; a furnace for the educational wing of the building; estimated interest costs; sidewalks; sanding of floors; finishing construction of stairway to the third floor. Our campaign was successful and we were at last able to proclaim the real victory and to announce that the entire indebtedness on our new church was underwritten!

A letter to the congregation dated February 18, 1949, and signed by O. R. McCoy, president of the Board of Trustees; Russell Plymale, Chairman of the Building Committee; Fred Webster Treasurer of the Building Fund, and myself, as Pastor, proclaimed that the total indebtedness was underwritten!

Much credit for the successful debt removing campaign must go to Dr. Parker's most efficient Campaign Organization. Many who worked in the campaign were veterans of many campaigns in Westmoreland, not only under my own ministry there, but going back many years before, some of them back even as far as when the little church had been built in 1927. Following the Parker Campaign we endeavored to keep the organization intact continue work on other phases of the church's program. With their help I had received many new members (as many as 85 in the year in which we paid off the indebtedness). I will list on the following page, the organization which Dr. Parker has perfected while he was with us at Westmoreland:

Debt Removing Campaign Organization
Dr. R. Morman Parker, Director, February 7-12, 1949

Executive Committee:

O. R. McCoy - General Chairman, R. C. Plymale, Associate Chairman
Fred Webster - Treasurer
Mrs. O. R. McCoy -President of WSCS
Russell Lowther - Pastor
Rev. M. B. Phillips
Dr. Rolla S. Kenaston
Mr. E. S. Webster
H. T. Tucker
J. H. McQueen

Special Gifts Committee:

Charles E. Newman, Eugene Deaton, W. L. Ellis,
Eugene Hickman, Russell Plymale

Division I - Major - Mrs. Eugene Hickman; Captains: Mrs. Russell Plymale Mrs. Owen Hanshaw, Mrs. Eugene Webster, Mrs. J. T. Bing

Division I - Major: James Taylor; Captains, William Humphreys, William Witham, Mrs. O. R. McCoy. J. D. Bordwine

Serving Banquet & Dinners: WSCS President, Mrs. O. R. McCoy;
Circle One: Mrs. Eugene Hickman, Circle Two: Mrs. G. C. Beck

Adult Bible Class: H. T. Tucker, President

Young Adult Class: J. H. MacQueen President

Methodist Youth: June Tucker, President

The Board Of Stewards serving currently at the time of the Debt Removing Campaign, February 7-12, 1949 also served as Visitors and Workers in the campaign: O. R. McCoy, R. C. Plymale, Jess Mosby, J. H. Ford, C. R. Bing, William Humphreys, H. S. Meadows, I. H. Carr, C. F. Ferguson, D. J. Queen, Fred Bowe, Elmer Shobe, A. M. McCaski, E. S. Webster, M. E Deaton, Lemuel Platt, G. C. Beck, C. S. Mullegan, John W. Davis, Mrs. Minnie B. Stead, E. E. Clark, Merlin Tucker, M. R. Burchet, C. A. Newman, W. L. Ellis, E. V. Jackson, Elgin Bias, J. C. Ward, O. K. Walker, James Taylor, George Martin, S. K. Brammell, H. W. Witham, J. D. Boardwine, J. H. McQueen, Jr., A. Carter, and John McQuaid.

The Right Story But The Wrong Picture

Telling the story of the final campaign to pay off the remaining indebtedness on our New Church at Westmoreland would not be complete without telling about a most interesting, if not humorous, incident that occurred on the morning of February 6, 1949. There are many people that will never forget what happened on that eventful morning.

Dr. Parker was to be with us on a very special Sunday Morning Service, complete with a very special souvenir bulletin, etc. to worship God and to create inspiration and enthusiasm for our campaign. No stone had been left unturned throughout the City of Huntington to publicize this. Among other things, I had called the Huntington News Paper the previous Friday, and had asked if they would send their photographer to take pictures of **Our New Westmoreland Methodist Church** and publish them in the Sunday News Paper for February 6th. This would be of such great help to us. They said they would be glad to do this. I waited for the photographer at the time they had told me he would come, but he never arrived. But I didn't think too much about this because I had many other irons in the fire at the same time and couldn't wait indefinitely. I took it for granted that he had come to take the pictures, which he could do without my help.

However, at about 4:30 in the Morning on Sunday, I heard the paper truck stop before our parsonage and a bundle of the Sunday Newspapers were thrown on the parsonage porch. Dewayne was a Newsboy at the time and the papers always came to our parsonage before they were received anywhere else in Westmoreland. I anxiously broke open the bundle of papers and began to read and expecting to see a large beautiful picture of our New Westmoreland Methodist Church of which we were all so proud.

Then, Horror of horrors! I saw that there had been a terrible mistake. I saw a large picture of a church basement, and under this pathetic picture was the caption: "The New Westmoreland Methodist Church" It was the wrong picture! (It was the picture of the Westmoreland Church of Christ on Auburn Road which had started a building program but had run out of money and had roofed over the basement and were using this for worship until they were able to build the sanctuary. The Newspaper had printed the right story, but had taken the wrong picture!

I didn't know what to do! My first irrational impulse was to gather up the whole bundle of papers and take them over to the flood wall and throw them into the Ohio River. How was I to face the congregation? It wouldn't be easy, for I knew the frame of mind they would have regarding this.

When the people arrived at church that eventful day, some were crying!, some were laughing!, some were angry! Some of the women who had worked so hard to help in the preparation for the Debt Removing Campaign actually cried audibly. It put the whole congregation in a difficult mood for the beginning of the campaign!

Fortunately, I had several hours to think about all of this before the members started arriving for Sunday School and Church Services that morning. I had received the shock of the newspaper error at about 4:30 A.M., and the people didn't start arriving until about 9:00 A.M. By that time it had occurred to me that this whole embarrassing incident could have a positive influence on all of us! "It should serve, I told the people, to remind us of how thankful we should be that this terrible picture in the paper was not really The Westmoreland Methodist Church; that our new and beautiful Sanctuary was completed and open for worship. If we had been less fortunate, all that we might have now would have been a basement! Anyway, people seemed to take to my suggestion of how to think and feel about this matter, and soon everything was back to normal and we were going full steam ahead toward our business at hand, which was the Debt Removing Campaign. The local newspaper, The Huntington Herald-Dispatch, the next day printed the real picture of Westmoreland Methodist Church and gave us a write up on our campaign, which helped us considerably!

The Best Year In The History Of The Westmoreland Church

To get back to the closing of the debt removing campaign, and to close out this section of my writing, I will simply quote the first paragraph of a letter that I sent to the congregation in September 1949. The letter was written just three weeks before I was moved from Westmoreland by our new District Superintendent.

261 Kentucky Street, Huntington 4, WV
September 6, 1949

To: Members and Friends of Westmoreland Methodist Church

Dear Friend: As we near the close of the Conference Year, we are happy to report that it has been the best year in the history of our local church. You will be glad to know that 85 new members have been received and $21,646 has been raised for all purposes. Your part in this work is most sincerely appreciated and we know that you will rejoice at heart to have had a part in this effort to advance The Master's Kingdom.

With kindest personal regards and thanking you again for your part in this victory for Christ and His Church, I am appreciatively yours, Russell Lowther, Pastor

Attached to each letter was a blank form on which I reported, to each contributor, the amount of their pledge and the amount paid.

Miscellaneous Personal Experiences During Our First Pastorate In Westmoreland

Many incidental experiences come to mind which have not been written into the chronological sequence of The Westmoreland Story, but may be added in this chapter. The incidents are most varied in nature, as you will see. Some will be humorous and some very serious, but taken together with what has already been written, ***they will serve to give a vivid picture of what our lives were like in those days:***

Dr. J. S. Richardson and the Postage Incident! I will never forget the laughter of the late Dr. J. S. Richardson, a Pharmacist, who owned a drug store in Westmoreland. His hilarious laughter was caused by my having walked into his store one night and told him that I was going to get our Parsonage debt paid off and then I was going to build a church! Then, looking him right in the face, I asked him to loan me the money to buy necessary postage to send out the first letter of this campaign! He thought that this was the funniest thing he had ever heard, and he laughed about this the rest of the many years that I knew him. However, he gave me the money I needed that night and in the years that followed I accomplished just what I had told the man I was going to do. The Parsonage debt was paid off and we built a new church.

There is an interesting co-incidence with regard to this story, or perhaps I should say that the story has an interesting sequel. When I went back to Westmoreland in later years for a second pastorate there, I went again to Dr. Richardson to borrow money to send out a letter announcing that we were beginning a campaign to provide a much needed new Methodist Parsonage. Again Dr. Richardson remembered the incident that occurred about 12 or 13 years previously and laughed again about it. However, again he gave me the money for the postage, and he said he knew from what had taken place before that I would do just what I said I was going to do.
Dr. Richardson had been raised in a Methodist Parsonage and knew something of the problems that a minister has. His wife, Mable Nutter Richardson, was a former Ritchie County, West Virginia girl. This had been the county in which my own childhood had been lived. Anyway, "Doc" and Mable became good friends of ours. Several years later, (September 1961), I conducted his funeral and he is buried in Woodmere Cemetery in Huntington, where our son, Paul, is buried.

A rather unusual thing occurred at the time of Dr. Richardson's death. We were on vacation and had stopped at a restaurant in Princeton, West Virginia. As we were eating our lunch, I suddenly felt that I should go home to Huntington. I told Catherine about this "hunch" or "intuition" and she agreed that if I felt that way, then we should go home, although going back to Huntington at that time was not in our plans. Anyway, when we arrived back in Huntington and had driven into the carport beside the house, we could hear our phone ringing. We were told that Dr. Richardson had suffered a fatal heart-attack on the golf course at Spring Valley and was dead!

Mr. Frank Tucker Artist Par Excellence

One of the most skillful artists, and dearest friend, that I ever knew was an elderly retired man named Frank Tucker. Mr. Tucker had spent his life as an artist for the Horn Department Store in Pittsburgh, and after retirement came to Huntington to live with his daughter, Mrs. E. E. Smith who lived on Alabama Street in Huntington near our parsonage. I spent many hours with Mr. Tucker, either fishing or just sitting by and watching him at his painting. I marveled at how this elderly man, with a tiny artist's brush and a little oil paint, could paint the most beautiful landscape one could ever hope to see; and yet, he could use a heavy four-inch paint brush to help beautify the social rooms of our church or spread cement to help stop the moisture in the basement walls. One day I went to his home to find him putting the final touches on a beautiful landscape. I admired it, and told Mr. Tucker that I recognized the scene that he had in mind. "You are kidding," he said. But I assured him that I was not, and told him where it was, that it was a scene on Mud River near Milton where he and I had fished one day several months previously. He was overjoyed that from his painting I had recognized the place it represented and he would just make me a present of it!

Several years after I first became acquainted with Mr. Tucker, I remembered some things about painting that he had taught me, and began trying to learn to paint. Friends have said that I didn't do too awfully bad. Any way, the inspiration to try to paint came from Mr. Tucker and I found myself trying to imitate his work. In September of 1959, I was back in Huntington again as pastor and renewed acquaintance with Mr. Tucker. He was using his same old wooden paint box with many twisted tubes of paint of all colors in it. When he died was asked to conduct his last Rites, and I thought it appropriate in his service to quote a poem by some unknown writer; a few of the lines I remember now off hand were: "When earth's last picture is painted and the tubes are all twisted and dried; When the oldest color has faded and the youngest critic has died; We shall rest and faith we shall need it lie down for an eon or two, And the Master of all good workmen shall put us to work anew! You may well imagine my feeling when sometime later Mr. Tucker's daughter, Grace Smith, gave me her father's old wooden paint box with the twisted tubes of color still in it. She said that she just knew that her father would want me to have it. It is one of my most loved heirlooms and I doubtless will be using it later, and by it will always be remembering Mr. Tucker, an artist "Par Excellence"!

Mr. Harry Witham - A Man With A Sense Of Humor

One day the phone rang and a voice said: Brother Lowther, come quick, I feel real bad and I don't think I will last very long!" It was the voice of brother Harry Witham, a real prince of a man. Anyway, I ran to his home on Illinois Street just as fast as I could go. As I approached the house I saw Harry in a chair propped up against the garage, his hat pulled down over his face and his arms dangling limply at his side. "Are you allright?" (I called to him as I came across the lawn toward him. He didn't answer! When I got to him and lifted his hat off his face, he started to laugh! "I didn't mean to scare you," he said, but "I just wanted to see how I rated with you, and that if I did really get into trouble if you would come to help me"! Then he laughed again. "What I really wanted, he went on to say, is to give you a contribution on your Parsonage Debt Campaign." He then gave me $25.00, which in that campaign was a real big contribution. He told me that he didn't want to wait until Sunday to give me the donation, for he was afraid that by that time he would have changed his mind, so he thought it best to give me the money during the week while he was "in the mood"! Mr. Witham was a painter, and one of the best! A curious thing about his painting houses was that he loved to do "the most difficult part in the painting, which is what he called "Cutting around the windows." Most painters would rather paint a wide board rather than a narrow thin window sash. Anyway, Mr. Witham was an interesting person and a good friend. In memory I can still see him going up and down Auburn Road on his bicycle with buckets of paint hanging on the handle bars, and going to or coming from work.

Memorable Sounds In Westmoreland

Many and varied sounds were heard in Westmoreland during those years, (1944-1949), and now echo in memory. Some of those sounds are common and may yet be heard most anywhere, but there were some which were peculiar to those times and will never be heard again.

The Sound Of The Horse Drawn Milk-Wagon

This sound was heard each morning. The War was still on and gasoline was still rationed, so milk delivery was by a horse drawn milk-wagon. The Click-Clank-Click Clank sound of the horse walking rapidly on the brick street in front of the church, together with the grating sound of the iron rimed wagon wheels, fastened in our memories of those days. I thought it was interesting the way in which the driver had trained his horse, so that he did not have to guide him, but only to issue his commands audibly as they went along down Auburn Road!

Throughout the day, when the building program really got into high gear, it was the sound of the bulldozer, the cement mixer, the crane, the hammer, and the power saw, that was like music to the ears of many people who were interested in the Westmoreland Church building program.

In early evening, it was the sound of accelerated traffic on Auburn Road as people hurried home from work in the up-town section of Huntington; it was children's voices rejoicing because school was out for the day; many of them passed near the parsonage as they wrestled, fought, and scuffled their way home.

In late evening, the voices of laughing youth in the excitement of the roller coaster and ferris wheel at Camden Park Amusement Center, came to our ears. There would also be at this hour the inspired chatter of anxious voices gathered around a table in the old church, planning a new building.

Later in the night, when meetings had ended and Camden Park Amusement Center had closed down we would be aware of the sounds of a million frogs in the lowlands between unsettled Kentucky and Alabama Streets near the flood wall. And there would be the din of the insects of the night also adding their unintelligible songs to the crescendo.

At all hours, there would be the distant rumble of freight trains crossing the high bridge and tressel at Kenova, where the Northwestern rail road passed across the river into Kentucky. We would notice this especially in the "stillness" of the night, and more especially when the ground was frozen or there was sleet on the snow. Adding to this train sound in the distance, were the sounds of the shrill whistles and grinding wheels of two other railroads, the B. & O., which passed through the center of Westmoreland and the C & O which skirted the hills at the edge of the community where it ran parallel to the old historic James River and Kanawha Turnpike on the South side. The most of the traffic at that time was on the C. & O. The sound of the N. & W., however, as it crossed the bridge at Kenova, was possibly the most memorable of the train sounds. It was like a rumble; it was somewhat like the sound of prolonged thunder from an approaching storm.

T***he most memorable sound of all was that from the traffic on the Ohio River.*** At all hours we could hear the awesome blasts from the fog horns and the signaling from the boats as they passed on the river, or as they approached the locks at Dam #28. Sometimes when the river was at or near flood stage, we could see the top deck of tug-boats above the flood wall. We thought a lot about this, and it was a kind of awesome feeling when we saw this, for we knew full well what would happen if the flood wall would ever give way! Suffice it to say that if this ever happened, the Beautiful Ohio would not seem quite as beautiful. Then too, I often thought of how the river had taken a swipe at me once before, in 1913, and had at that time almost inundated our home in Proctor. I had escaped then, but I wondered if Old Man River might be getting ready to try again! As the old spiritual song has it: "Old Man River, he must know somethin' but dont say nothin' he just keeps rollin' along!"

Flood Wall Meditation!

Our little parsonage faced toward the west. In front of the parsonage was a tiny cindered street only one block long, running from Auburn Road Southward to a dead end against the flood wall. This was known as Kentucky Street, for it was a quiet avenue of approach to one of the finest places for meditation that I have ever known, the flood wall! When cares and problems were about to be overwhelming, I would take off down Kentucky Street to the flood wall. I had learned that the stillness and exercise of walking on the wall would in some way bring relief from tension. The Ohio River, as I often saw it at night, flowing quietly onward, reflecting the moonbeams, or lights from its shores, symbolized another river that flows quietly onward , reflecting the moonbeams, or lights from it's shores, symbolized another "river" that flows quietly onward day and night through time and eternity and into which I could place all my cares and woes - it was the "river" of God's eternal love that passes all understanding"! The flood wall itself, so firm beneath my feet, symbolized the Firm Foundation of the fixed and unchanging laws of God, and in relationship to which one may always walk with confidence.

Often, when walking eastward on the Wall, I would arrive at the pumping station across from Ohio River Lock # 28. I would watch the heavily loaded barges being assisted by the Locks. I felt that this symbolized the work of the Church in the "river of life", enabling burdened humanity to avoid the hazards of a shallow life and to sail successfully onward until its destination is reached.!

The Tragic Death Of Leonard Hartz

One evening, not too long after our New Church opened for worship, there was an experience that Catherine and I will never forget due to the very unusual co-incidence that was involved. A new organ had been installed in our new Sanctuary and one evening we heard the most beautiful music; someone was playing the much loved "Ave Maria" and playing it as we had never heard it played before. We came quietly into the back

pew of the Sanctuary and sat for some time listening. It was being played by Mr. Leonard Hartz, who was the Band Master and teacher of music at Vinson High School. He had heard that we had a new organ and had come to try it out. It wasn't more than thirty minutes after this that the news came over the radio that Mr. Hartz and other members of the Huntington Fire Department, had lost their lives in the flood waters of the Ohio River where they had gone to answer an emergency call to rescue someone who had fallen into the river. They were unable to start the motor on their boat and were swept by the current beneath a string of barges that were anchored nearby!

The Airplane Crash - Westmoreland Church Had Narrow Escape

On Sunday morning, August 11, 1946, I was returning to Westmoreland from Beverly Hills Church where I had served as visiting minister that morning to represent the Westmoreland Building Program. As I came to the cement bridge that crosses Four Pole Creek and the Wayne County Line, I could see that something terrible had happened down Auburn Road near our Church. Cars were parked everywhere including people's lawns! I couldn't get any closer with my car, so got out and started to run toward the Church. From a distance it looked as though the excitement, whatever it was, was at our church! I knew that in some regards our little church building was dangerous! The floors of the church school rooms were ready to collapse. As I ran toward the church I feared that this had happened! I was greatly relieved when I got close enough to see that the attention of the crowd of people was directed toward the other side of Auburn Road from the Church. There had been a mid-air crash involving a light trainer plane and a heavier twin engine Navy Plane. The Navy Plane had missed hitting our church by only a few feet as it fell. Witnesses who were standing in our church yard and saw the crash said that as the plane came down it brushed through the limbs of a weeping willow tree which stood across the narrow Alley-way from the church. If this was true, and I have no reason to doubt it, judging from the location of the wreckage, the plane didn't miss our church by more than fifteen feet at the most! The main part of the wreckage lay in a deep construction ditch near the middle of a vacant lot across the road from the church. Many people believe that the pilot still had partial control of the plane and was trying to hit into the vacant lot. This, of course, we will never know as he and his two companions lay dead in the ditch!

Incidentally, Mr. W. L. Ellis, who was one of our members at Westmoreland, ran to the wreckage and jumped down into the ditch and was trying with all his might to drag the three dead men out. There was much danger of fire as the ditch was filling up with gasoline from the ruptured tanks. People called to him to get out quick before there was a fire but brother Ellis paid no attention to them, he only yelled back, "There's somebody's boys in here and I've got to get them out"! Happily the pilot had turned off the ignition and there was no fire!

The other plane in the crash, the trainer plane, had fallen almost straight down from the point of impact and came to rest at the end of New York Street, between the flood wall and the river. The pilot, J. P. Corkran, Jr. of Huntington, was killed instantly. The pilots of the Navy Plane were: Lieutenant John S. Row, Jr. (25) of 523 Fifth Street, Huntington; Lieutenant Commander Clark Lee Henderson, (28) of Staatsburg, New York and Aviation Machinist's Mate Cecil Elbert Whitten, Jr. (21) of Foster, Boone County, West Virginia.

Catherine came near seeing the mid-air crash of the planes at the point of impact. She was sitting by a window in the parsonage when she heard the crash, looked up and saw the air filled with debris from the planes floating down!

Mr. W. G. Clark - My Favorite "Teller Of Tall Tales"

When we first went to Huntington in 1944, the first family that we received into the membership of the Westmoreland Church was Mr. & Mrs. E. E. Clark. I visited them often at their home on Park Avenue and was fortunate to meet Elvin's father, Mr. W. G. Clark, who lived with them. Mr. Clark, a very large man, weighing probably as much as two hundred and seventy five pounds with course features and a deep bass voice and friendly attitude was a most delightful person with whom to be acquainted.

The fascinating thing about Mr. W. G. Clark was the most subtle sense of humor that he had. He would start to tell you something and you could not possibly judge from his expression whether this was to be the truth, or a story that he was making up as he went along. He would keep you in suspense until the last moment and then would spring the "punch-line" on you.

One day we were fishing near Point Pleasant and using a boat which he had borrowed from a friend. Elvin and I had helped the old man into the boat and I was to go with him in the boat and Elvin would fish off the bank. It must have been a funny sight to see Mr. Clark and I in this boat for his great weight on one end of the boat almost submerged it, while my end of the boat was almost out of the water for I only weighed about half as much as Mr. Clark. Anyway we anchored the boat to a snag out in the pond and began fishing We were not having much luck and things were rather dull, when suddenly Mr. Clark started to tell me about one of his "experiences." As well as I can remember, this is the way he told it:

"Russell, I'm glad we could come to this spot to fish today, for it was right here that I had one of the most unusual experiences of my life; that is why I wanted you to come here with me so I could point it out to you right where it all took place." Then Mr. Clark hesitated and began to look all around like he was trying to identify the place. He looked at the trees on the bank and certain snags in the water, and then he continued! "yes", he said, "There's no mistake, it occurred right here where we are sitting. The water was clear as a crystal that day and as I looked over the side of the boat I saw a strange thing. There was a large school of fish swimming fast right under me! Suddenly the fish all stopped! Then, would you believe it, here went another school of fish swimming just as fast and passed right in front of the school of fish that was stopped. In a little bit, that school stopped, and here went the first school swimming in the same direction they had gone before they had stopped. Well, they kept this up for quite awhile as I watched. It seemed like a curious thing, & I couldn't understand it. Then I noticed something else! Down under the schools of fish near the bottom was the biggest fish I've ever seen in this pond! That rascal was four feet long if he was an inch! He just kept laying still there at that same place. I was trying to let my line and hook down to see if I could possibly snare him and in trying to do this I got a better look at him and I noticed something I had not noticed before; That son of a gun had one red eye and one green eye. Well, Russell, it was clear to me now what he was doing! He was directing traffic for the swimming schools of fish! He closed the red eye and then he would close the green eye and open the red eye, and this is what kept the schools from running into each other!"

Well, I laughed until I almost fell out of the boat. In telling the story Mr. Clark had known just when to pause for the proper effect, and just when to emphasize his statements, etc. One would have to have known Mr. Clark to have realized what a funny story he had told. I am sure that he had made up that story at that time; that he never had heard it anywhere, nor have made it up at some other time previously. It was a brand new story that came up out of his imagination at that very hour. Anyway, Mr. Clark was surely my favorite teller of tall tales in Westmoreland.

The Paper Passer Pastor

Not too long after we went to Westmoreland Dewayne went to work as a Paper Boy. He had an enormous route which, as I recall, comprised all of the territory between the B & O Railroad and The Flood Wall and from the Wayne Line all the way to Burlington Road. It was such a big route that as I look back on it now I don't see how he was able to do it.

Anyway, his papers would be delivered to our parsonage at early morning, long before daylight, and he would take all he could carry and start out. When that bunch was delivered he would come back after another load. Sometimes I would help a little by taking the bunches of papers in the car and "spotting" them on the street corners to save him from having to come all the way back to the parsonage for more papers.

One morning when there was snow on and it was miserably cold, I felt sorry for Dewayne and decided to help him pass some of the papers. It was then only about 5:00 o'clock in the morning and dark in the streets. No one would ever see me or know the difference and it wouldn't hurt me any, so why not? And, wouldn't you just know it, the very first paper I delivered, I got caught! It happened at the home of Mrs. Leonard Lee at 3010 Auburn Road. As I was attempting to put the paper behind the storm-door, as Dewayne always did, Mrs. Lee, (I think her name was Myrtle) raised a window and said: "Why, Reverend Lowther, I didn't know you were also our paperboy!" Before noon I think everyone knew about this.

Well, you have doubtless heard the old saying, "You could have knocked me over with a feather!" That is about the sensation I had when I heard Mrs. Lee's voice. Incidentally, my humiliations were not over that morning by any means! Something went wrong with my car and I had gone to the Boardwine Service Station later that morning. I noticed that everyone was looking at me and laughing. After awhile I noticed that my bright colored pajamas, with big blue stars in them, had worked down below my pants cuffs by about six inches, and was indeed a funny sight! It had been so early and so cold that morning that I had put my clothes on over my pajamas and had not had time yet to take them off and get shaved and dressed for the day.

The Car Brakes Fixed Just In Time!

It was rather difficult to keep our car in good state of repair in those days due to our lack of finances. When anything wore out or broke about the car we usually just patched it up any way we could and kept on running. We were having to drive an awful lot around the District promoting our building program and also our hospitals which I visited every day were all located in the other end of Huntington. It was twelve miles from our parsonage to St. Mary's Hospital.

Anyway, in due time the brakes on the old car were completely gone as far as any sudden emergency stop would be concerned. I knew better than to drive the car in that condition, but there didn't seem to be anything that I could do about it. I just kept on driving! One morning I woke up worrying about this. Something seemed to be saying to me that I was pressing my luck too far and I had better do something about these brakes! I knew a young fellow who had a repair shop in an old garage behind his house over on Hughes Street. I went to him and through his willingness to wait for his money, my brakes were relined and put into first class condition.

The very next morning, I was driving down Adams Avenue toward Westmoreland when I got a kind of "shock" that was to stay with me the rest of my life. As I came to the intersection of Adams Avenue and 14th Street, I saw that I had the green light and so stepped on the gas to pass on through the intersection. There wasn't much traffic on the street, and only a few people walking on the sidewalks. Suddenly, just about the time my car was under the traffic light, a child darted full speed out of the corner drug store and right in front of my car! I hit the brakes and slid all four wheels and just barely escaped running over that child!

I was so unnerved and "Shook-up" over this incident that I couldn't continue on my way for quite some time. I just pulled over to the curb and sat there thinking about all of this, and being thankful that I had repaired the breaks the day before. In some ways this has had an infuence on my driving for the rest of my life. There is a phrase I often repeat to myself, "From Out of Nowhere!" and "Just when one least expects it."

Christmas Time At Westmoreland - 1944-1949

As this section of my memoirs is being written, it is Christmas time, December 1975, and it is a good time to record some of the memorable experiences which took place in Westmoreland during my first pastorate there, 1944-1949. Christmas was really "Christmas" at that time, complete with all the trimmings including the tree; the colorful decorations; the music; the caroling; the parties; the hayrides; the delicious food; the candy and the cookies and I think it would take the writing of a book to adequately describe it all.

However, there was one thing especially unique about the way Christmas was observed at the Little White Church in Westmoreland. It seemed to be standard Christmas Procedure to give the minister a present in some manner that would surprise him and at the same time provide good humor and laughter for the members. I will tell of a few of these;

At our first Christmas there in 1944, a large happy crowd was gathered around the Christmas Tree at the church. Santa had arrived and was distributing presents from beneath the tree. The last present from the tree was a big card-board box with holes in it, which Santa handed to me with a hearty "Ho, Ho, Ho!" As I was about to thank Santa for the present, a live Chicken within the box stuck it's head out one of the holes in the top of the box and started looking all around. Everyone roared with laughter and then Santa told me to read the message on the top of the box. The message was, "Thou Shalt Not Kill!" This incident had been "thought up" by Mr. Brammell, who had also provided the big fat Rhode Island Red Hen!

At another Christmas Party, which was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Hickman who lived on Auburn Road above the church, the members of the Adult Bible Class told me that they thought I would make

a good "pin-up-girl." They told me that I would have to be blindfolded for this part of the program. So then, after the blindfold was in place I stood up in the middle of the floor and meanwhile members of the class were all around me, laughing and making lots of fun out of what ever they were doing, which at the moment was "greek" to me. Finally they said that the blindfold should be removed, and I was surprised to find dollar bills pinned all over me from my pants cuffs up to my shoulder. Each member of the class had pined a dollar to my clothing. I said that if that is what was meant by being a "pin-up-girl" I was all in favor of it and would play again at any time.

Another year at the Christmas party I was presented with a small medicine box and inside the little box was a very large capsule. They said that I should take this capsule and that it would cure at least some of my ills. They all got a big laugh watching me turn the capsule around in my hand and trying to figure out what the joke was. I discovered that inside the capsule was a $20.00 bill. Someone must have worked on it for hours to get it small enough to be concealed inside the capsule. I think Dr. Richardson at the Drug Store must have worked this out for the class. Anyway, this surely wasn't a hard pill to take!

A special happy activity each Christmas time at Westmoreland was the Caroling. The Youth and Young Adults would place an old Pump Organ on the back of a truck and go all over the community singing Christmas Carols, especially for those who were sick or shut-in. Many would ride from place to place on the truck, while others would follow along in their cars. Mrs. Taylor Bing, the choir director, would direct the songs while Mrs. James Taylor, (formerly Faye Webster) would play the organ. One place especially we would go was to the home of Rev. Pollitt, who lived in the Ritter Park section of Huntington at about 11th or 12th Avenue. Rev. Pollitt was a much loved retired minister who had done much to hold the little church together during the trying days of the floods before the flood wall made our community more stable. Incidentally, when Dr. Pollitt died in 1953, I was called back to assist in his funeral. He was a good man and his influence upon the lives of many was very great.

Anyway, ***Christmas Time at Westmoreland was a most enjoyable and exciting time,*** and to say that it was indeed a "Memorable" time is probably the understatement of the year. I feel that the joy and gladness of the occasion was truly born of their faith in God's love and in the Prince of Peace, and in Hope for the future. Westmoreland people had an understanding of what is really significant in life and what Christmas really is, or supposed to be!

Kissin' The Preacher Off To Conference!

Westmoreland people in general had a most delightful sense of humor and I have thought many times of what a blessing this was. Without that good sense of humor I don't know how we would ever have gotten through the difficult and discouraging days of the parsonage debt campaign and the building program in general. There were many bitter disappointments and heartaches which have long since been forgotten in the glory of our having been successful in our endeavors. However, the good humor flared, not only at Christmas time, but at Conference time and other occasions.

One evening, I was at the parsonage working on my report to the Annual Conference, and needed some information from the Woman's Society to complete the report. The society was meeting that evening at the church and I went into the meeting to gather the information I needed. When I started to leave, the president of the group said to me: "Preacher, we have an old custom here in our society that when our preacher starts to Conference we all give him a big kiss and we call it 'kissin' the preacher off to Conference!" Before I could say anything, or, while I was hesitating to think of something to say, one of the ladies came up and gave me a big kiss on the side of my face. At the same incident, one of them put a little dab of lipstick on my shirt and another one proceeded to muss up my hair. Well, everyone had a good laugh over this and one of the ladies then suggested that for my safety, and to see that I didn't get beat-up by my wife when I got home, that maybe they should go along home with me and help to explain everything to Catherine. There upon the whole society went home with me and it is probably a good thing for me that they did, for how could I ever have explained the lipstick on my shirt?

As I have written earlier, the little Woman's Society of Christian Service, which they called "The Missionary Society" because Westmoreland had been a former Southern Methodist Church, gave the first contribution to the New Church Building Fund, and before this, they had sponsored the all important Community Survey which I have explained. There were only twenty-five in the society and Mrs O. R. McCoy was the President.

Move Your End, Horse!

Speaking of humor at Westmoreland reminds me of an incident involving Catherine which has caused a lot of laughs through the years as it is told over and over again on many occasions.

Every Friday evening there was a covered dish dinner at The Little White Church. Because the parsonage was next to the church and Catherine and I were always available, it became our duty each Friday to set up the tables for the dinner. This was quite a task! To accomplish it, all the pews in the church had to be moved to the front of the sanctuary. Then, saw horses were placed at the back of the sanctuary and the heavy table tops, which were stored back in the Sunday School rooms during the week, had to be carried out and placed on the saw horses! This was a difficult thing, because of the heavy table-tops and the crowded condition. The table tops would have to be lifted over the pews, and chairs etc. By the time we got this done we would be pretty well exhausted and sometimes in rather a bad frame of mind for dinner.

Anyway, one evening we were trying to place the table tops on the saw-horses and were having some difficulty. It seems that one of the saw-horses was not in it's proper place to receive the table-top, while we were lifting and struggling with one of the tops. Catherine kept saying to me "move your end, horse!" This was the last straw, for I was tired and hot and upset anyway, so I just dropped my end of the table-top and stepped back and shouted to Catherine: "You move your end, Horse! Well, she got so amused at me comparing her and also myself to a "horse" that she then dropped her end of the table top also!

This incident marked the ending of Catherine and I putting up tables each Friday for the Covered-Dish dinners. The story soon got out, and everyone laughed about it, but also soon did something about it. I am not certain who put up the tables each Friday for the Covered Dish Dinners after that but it runs in my mind that Bob Webster and some of the other high school boys took on the job; also that Bill Witham and his Boy Scout Troops helped.

Catherine Borrowed A Cup Of Plaster

"Could I borrow a cup of plaster?" That is what Catherine asked Mr. Asa Garland one day as he was at work plastering a room in our new church. "What on earth do you want with a cup of plaster?" Mr. Garland exclaimed. Then Catherine explained the whole matter: "Oh, I need it to repair a hole in the ceiling of our living room at the parsonage," she said. "You see, Russell told me never to go to the attic because there isn't any floor and I could fall through the ceiling. But I had to go to the attic where some of our things are stored. My foot slipped off of a rafter that I was trying to walk on and my heel punched a hole in the ceiling! I've just got to get it fixed before he comes home and tells me, "I told you so!"

Mr. Garland gave her the cup of plaster and she fixed the hole in the ceiling. But she didn't do a very good job, and the last time I ever saw the little parsonage there was still a raised place on the ceiling which stood out "like a sore thumb" every time you glanced up! I may add that while Catherine is not a very good plasterer as far as holes in the ceiling are concerned, she came very near "plastering me" when I came home and told her "I told you so"!

However, there is a most embarrassing sequel to this story about Catherine falling through the ceiling, or rather, punching a small heel size hole in the ceiling of our living room. She had the last laugh in the matter, as she usually does! Anyway, I was up in the attic of the old church one day looking for a gas stove that had been stored up there. My foot also slipped off of a rafter that I was trying to walk on, and a chunk of plaster about a foot wide and about three feet long fell down on the pews in the sanctuary below. The falling plaster made some scars on the pews that I couldn't cover up. I suppose the scars are still in the pews, for those same pews were later installed in the Sanctuary of the new church. Anyway, it was now Catherine's turn to say: "I told you so!"

Methodist Minister's Children In Westmoreland Church

Considering the size of the Westmoreland Methodist Church it must surely have the record for the number of members who were raised in the parsonage. Not only were there so many, but they all were giving good account of their presence in the building program.

- Mrs. O. R. McCoy, who was the President of the Missionary Society, (the WSCS) was the daughter of the Reverend S. H. Anvil;
- Dr. J. S. Richardson, who served as one of the Trustees, and about whom I wrote previously as being the one who assisted in getting the program started by loaning me money to launch the campaign, was the son of Dr. J. Frank Richardson, prominent Methodist Minister;
- Mrs. Taylor Bing, who directed the choir at our church in Westmoreland was a daughter of Rev. R. D. Hall;
- Mr. Earl Strohmeyer, who served as teacher of the young adult class, and also for some of the time as teacher of the Adult Bible Class, was the son of Rev. W. C. Strohmeyer;
- Mrs. Ruth Hanser, who also taught in our Church School, was the daughter of Rev. M. B. Phillips;
- Mrs. John Davis, one of the new members of our church at that time, was the daughter of Rev. J. W. Crites;
- Our own sons, Reverend Dewayne R. Lowther, who although he was very young at the time, certainly did much to help the program in many ways and our youngest son, Paul who was only one year old when we moved to Westmoreland.

Doubtless there were other children of Methodist Ministers who were in the congregation at the time, but whose names I do not recall at the moment (after twenty five or thirty years, names are difficult to remember). Anyway, the Children of the parsonage were giving good account of themselves in the Westmoreland program.

Coincidence Regarding The Taylor Bing Family

(A sacred gift by the choir)

One of the fine families in the Westmoreland Church was the Taylor Bing Family. One day, as I was visiting them, I learned that Mrs. Bing was the daughter of a Methodist Minister, Rev. R. D. Hall. The name "rang a bell" in my memories. I knew that somewhere I had heard this name. It turned out that Rev. Hall, had been appointed many, many years ago to serve as pastor of the Earl Charge in Nicholas County and had lived at Canvas while seving there. This had been his first pastorate. He had occupied the same house that I had lived in for four years while I was serving the Earl Charge as my first charge. Then I remembered that it had been in the membership records there that I had seen his name. Mrs. Bing, however, had not been born at that time, but a few years later her father had been pastor of the Stealey Heights Church in Clarksburg.

During the visit that day with the Bings, I was shown the Communion Set which Rev. Hall had used. Since I did not have an individual Communion set, Mrs. Bing loaned me the one used by her father, and I used this in my hospital visitation and in visiting the shut-ins of our community who were unable to attend Communion at Church. Sometime later, The Choir of Westmoreland Church gave me a Communion Set which I used in my work throughout my ministry and which I needless to say, still have. It is indeed a most sacred possession.

Mrs. Bing was a good Choir Director and could be depended upon to serve the church in any way that she could. She would sing for funerals and was in demand for this service constantly. I always knew when families of deceased loved ones requested that certain music be provided, I could rely upon Mrs Bing. Other members of the choir would also help, especially Mrs. Fay Taylor and Mrs. William Humphreys.

Incidentally, during my first pastorate, Westmoreland church and choir were the first to be televised by WSAZ. Sometimes the service would be broadcast each Sunday for a month with the broadcast originating at our Sanctuary.

"V.E.(Victory in Europe) Day" At The Little White Church

In 1945 when the current news seemed to suggest that "V-E Day" was drawing near, we made careful plans for services to be held at the Little White Church. If news of the end of the War in Europe was received after 8:00 P.M., the special service of Thanksgiving and Celebration would be held the next morning at 10:00 A.M. If the news was received after 10:00 A.M. the service would be held that same day in the evening at 8:00 P.M.

However, when the news flash came, and Victory in Europe was proclaimed, May 7, 1945, everyone was so happy and excited that no thought whatsoever was given to schedules previously arranged for services at the Church. As I look back upon it, I am surprised at myself that I could not have anticipated what would happen when this great news of "V-E Day" came.

There was excitement everywhere. Brother John McQuaid, came rushing up the street in his little green panel truck and, skidding to a stop in front of the church, leaped out and started running toward us across the lawn, and laughing and crying and praising God all at the same time! He threw his old green cap into the air and shouted: Ah, brother 'Lauder' just think what this means; Turning toward the several people already gathered in the church yard he continued to exclaim: "Ah brother Lauder just think what this means; Just think about the joy in all the homes when the boys start coming back! By this time there were tears of joy and gladness flowing freely on all the faces of everyone in the Church Yard!

Brother McQuaid then rushed into the little church and started ringing the bell with all of his might and kept on, and on! In just a few minutes people came rushing up the street, down the alley, across the lawns and pouring into the church. Someone started a hymn and everyone joined in the singing, and as they sang they gathered at the altar of the humble little altar for a long while after the prayers. Throughout the remainder of the day and night, at any time you would see people coming into the church for prayer and meditation.

Everyone knew, of course, that there was still war in the Pacific with Japan, but felt that this soon would be over. In the following August, the Atomic Bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and soon afterward "V-J Day" was proclaimed. The rejoicing and celebrations which had taken place when "V-E Day" had been announced May 7th, were re-enacted and magnified. Now the War was ALL OVER, and rejoicing knew no bounds, excepting for the heavy hearts of those whose sons, brothers, and husbands, would never come home!

The Adult Bible Class Teachers

One of the truly great men in the history of The Westmoreland Adult Bible Class was Dr. F. S. Pollitt, a retired Methodist Minister. For many years he taught the Bible Class and in so doing held the little congregation together through some of its most trying times. Dr. Pollitt had served as a minister and Presiding Elder, (District Superintendent) in the Kentucky Conference, where he retired in 1936. He was a most scholarly gentleman, and in his soft and easy-going manner, he could hold the attention of a class much longer than the period normally provided for a class session.

The class adored Dr. Pollitt and in every way possible tried to show its appreciation for his service. Among other things, they learned of his fondness for roses, and each Sunday Morning the class provided a rosebud for his lapel. When we were planning the church, I had long since learned of the feeling of people in general toward this good man and suggested that the Chapel at the back of our Sanctuary in the New Church should be named: The Pollitt Chapel!

The Westmoreland Adult Bible Class was blessed also with the services of other retired ministers who, at various times, taught the class. Some of them were: Rev. M. B. Phillips, Rev. Ivy Yoke, Rev. W. A. Debar, and a local minister, Rev. Guy Spriggs. Other good teachers of the class among the Lay people included H. L. Goode, Lemuel Platt, Roland Patrick, and others. Presidents of the class whom I knew were, O.R. McCoy, J.M. Ward, H.T.Tucker, and S. K. Brammell.

Our Basketball Team Won League Championship

We were proud of our Church Basketball Team, which in 1948, won the Championship of the Huntington Church League. The team was coached by Mr. Bernard Caldwell who had been an athletic director and an experienced coach. The members of the team were: Robert Webster, Johnny Walker, Jack Lewis, James Goode, Merlin Tucker, Herbert Bocock and James Patterson.

A Scouting Church

The very first week that our New Church was opened, Boy Scout Troop #44 was organized and Mr William Witham was the first Scout Master. Soon after this, Cub Scouts were organized and Mr. Valgene Hooker was the Scout Master. Not long after this, Girl Scouts were organized and sponsored by our church.

Incidentally, I served in the scouting program as the Institutional Representative, Committeeman, and also as instructor for candidates for the God & Country Award. The boys kept their interest and worked hard in the program, fulfilling every requirement. They learned a lot; so did I!

Other Youth Activities

The Easter Sunrise Service at our church was always in charge of the Methodist Youth, and, as the saying is, "they did it up good!" One year they secured a truck and put an organ on it and we went to the country, to the farm of W. W. Payne, to have the service there. People of all ages would attend, but the youth were in charge of the program. A humorous thing happened on Easter Sunday 1949. The youth were in charge of the Sunday service as usual. As people were gathering for worship, it was not yet daylight and people were blundering along toward the church, some of us still half asleep. Suddenly we heard the organ prelude begin. The organist was playing "Moonlight and Roses!" Everyone got a real chuckle out of this, but as we thought of it, we concluded that it wasn't so inappropriate as we had thought at first. It was still dark outside and as far as I know the moon may indeed have been shining.

Sometimes "boys will be boys!" One day the youth at our church gave me a real embarrassing time, one that I wouldn't forget for awhile. There was a Huntington District Youth Rally scheduled for a Sunday Afternoon at the First Methodist Church on 5th Avenue. I had gathered several cars full of youth to represent our church and we started to the Rally. We parked in front of the church and started in. I went to join some of the ministers in the balcony while the youth would assemble in the main sanctuary.

However, it came to that time in the Rally when the various youth groups were to stand and be counted. There was always, in those days, a kind of competition between the pastors to see who could bring the largest delegation. Finally, when Westmoreland Church Youth were asked to stand, I stood up in the balcony thinking that my youth would be standing in the main sanctuary below, which I could not see. But there was a kind of ominous silence down there! Not one youth whom I had brought to the Rally was present to stand up and be counted. Later that day I learned that there had been some kind of excitement at the Roller Rinks that afternoon, possibly the opening of the rinks, I don't remember, Anyway , many of the youth had heard about this and went there post haste, forgetting all about the Rally!

But there were wonderful youth at Westmoreland and they worked hard for the New Church. I remember that at the beginning of the program, Mr. Robert Knight from First Methodist Church, who served as a member of our Advisory Committee, told us that the Armstrong Company in Huntington's West End, was doing remodeling at their plant and were going to destroy some of their furnaces. There were tons and tons of good used fire brick that were to be thrown away. He suggested that we could use these brick in countless ways at the church. The youth gave up their Saturdays and Holidays for quite some time to help haul these brick to our church where they were used in countless ways in the construction and saved much money for the building fun

First Weddings - First Funeral In The New Church

The first wedding in the new church sanctuary was that of Miss Phyllis Kathryn Burchett and Mr. Kenneth Merlin Tucker. It occured on August 27, 1948. The Bride was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. R.E. Burchett who lived on Auburn Road just across the street from the church. The groom was son of Mr. and Mrs. H. T. Tucker, who lived onPiedmont Road.

The first wedding in Pollitt Chapel of the New Church was that of Miss Frances Lorens Pennington and Mr. Clifford S. Plymale. It took place August 28, 1948. The groom was the son of Mr. Russell Plymale who had served as chairman of our Building Committee throughout the whole program. Russell Plymale suffered a heart attack and was under a doctor's care as the wedding of his son, Clifford, had been planned. As I recall, it was due to the illness of his father that Clifford had preferred a smaller and more private Wedding in the Chapel rather than to have a larger crowd in a wedding in the Sanctuary.

Incidentally, speaking of the illness of Russell Plymale, I may add that I have always thought that it was caused by the streneous life that he lived during construction of the New Church. He worked full time as manager of the W. W. Payne Feed and Supply Store on 14th Street and at the same time tried to keep up with the demands upon him regarding our building operations. Russell would take his lunch hour every day to visit construction work at our church, moving of our buildings, etc. He had little time to rest or even to eat his meals. Then too, while all of this was going on, his father, Mr. P.D. Plymale, became ill and died. I had conducted his funeral in the old church on its temporary foundation behind the parsonage and in back of new church consruction. Anyway, all of this, taken together was just too much.

The first funeral in the new church was that of Mr. Willis Fogle, who lived on Florence Street. After the funeral at the church, I accompanied his body to its final resting place in a cemetery in Columbus, Ohio. Mr. Fogle was the father of Mrs. Yvonne Bing, whom I had married at the Fogle Home on Florence Street, August 15, 1948. Charles Richard Bing, Mr. Fogle's son-in-law, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Bing about whom I wrote earlier.

Harmony Prevailed

On the day the New Church was opened for worship, Easter Sunday, March 28, 1948, the architect, Mr. A. F. Tucker, the superintendent of construction, Mr. Asa Garland; the brick contractor, Mr. John Hemann, and myself as pastor, came together at the church to have our pictures taken together. During this time, one of the men remarked that there had not been in the whole program a serious contention of any kind among us. We had worked together in harmony, and whatever differences we may have had at any time were quickly overcome in a spirit of cooperation and understanding. We had enjoyed working together, and getting along together was no problem!

One thing that helped us, I'm sure, was the fact that both Mr. Tucker, the architect, and Mr. Garland, the superintendent of construction, were experienced in working with churches, and knew the kind of problems that any small local church would face in a program of this kind. Mr. Tucker was a member of Beverly Hills Methodist Church and worked with many other local churches in their building and remodeling programs. Mr. Garland was a member of the 7th Avenue Methodist Church and had been employed in construction there several years before. Mr. Hemann, if my memory serves me correctly, was a member of the 9th Avenue Methodist Church.

For my part, what I lacked in experience I made up for in faith, enthusiasm and determination! I also, if I do say so myself, burned an awful lot of mid-night oil! To save money for the church, I served as Clerk of the Works, being coached in this from day to day by my friend, Mr. Tucker. I also was the Secretary, the money raiser, the local and district promoter of the cause, and the pastor etc. etc.! Mr. Fred Webster was our building fund treasurer. However, he was out of town nearly all the time in his work as Traveling Salesman for The Logan Hardware Company. Each week when he came home I would give him a report on the amount which I had deposited in the bank while he was gone, and he would sign a few dozen blank checks for me to fill in the proper amount at the end of the week to pay the workers.

Officiary For Conference Year

The last Quarterly Conference at The Westmoreland Methodist Church during my "first" pastorate there was held on August 10, 1949 which was only about one month before I was moved away from Huntington. As a matter of interest and historical record, I will list the OFFICIARY that was elected at that Conference to serve for the Conference Year 1949-1950. For the most part, these members had been with us throughout the building program for the five years I had been at Westmoreland, and who worked also in the final campaign which paid off the final indebtedness; 1949-1950.

Trustees Of Church And Parsonage:

O. R. McCoy President	S. K. Brammell	Fred Webster
E. S. Webster	C. R. Newman	E. V. Jackson
R. C. Plymale	O. H. Mills	J. S. Richardson

Stewards - Official Board:

M. R. Burchett	J. D. Boardwine	J. H. Ford
Lemuel Platt	Merlin Tucker	Elgin Bias
H. W. Witham	E. E. Clarke	I. H. Carr
C. A. Newman	J. S. Richardson	O. R. McCoy
E. V. Jackson	S. K. Brammell	Fred Webster
R. C. Plymale	O.H. Mills	E. S. Webster
C. R. Bing	J. H. Macqueen, Jr.	C. S. Mullegan
Fred Bowe	James Taylor	William Humphreys
E. D. Shobe	George Martin	F. C. Orner
George Doggett	Valgene Hooker	B. S. Stevens
Clifford Plymale	H. T. Tucker	Mrs. W. L. Ellis
Mrs. Eugene Hickman	Mrs. H. W. Witham	A. M. McCaskie
Mamie Jewan Caldwell		

Treasurers:

Financial Secretary, & Treasurer of Current Expenses	Mrs. Harry Witham
Building Fund	Fred Webster
Reserve Pension Fund	C. A. Newman
WSCS	Mrs. E. D. Shobe
Benevolences	Mrs. E. Hickman

Other Officers:

Church School Superintendent	E. S. Webster
Recording Steward	O. R. McCoy
Lay Leader	E. E. Clarke
Lay Member - Annual Conference	H. T. Tucker
President - WSCS	Mrs. W. L. Ellis
President - M.Y.F.	Shirley Brammell
Custodian - Legal Papers	O. R. McCoy

In addition to this listing of names, there were countless others who were serving on the standing committees of the Quarterly Conference, officers of the circles of the WSCS, teaching in the church school, officers of the church school classes, fellowship of Men and Youth groups in the church etc.

Quilters

No writing of my memories of Westmoreland, either for my first or second pastorate, would be complete without mentioning the ***loyal group of women who were known as "The Quilters".*** They met each week in one of the church school rooms of the old church, and later in the social rooms of the new church. The work which they did was of inestimable value, not only because they sold their quilts and provided money for the social and spiritual values which they made possible. Their noonday devotions which they conducted was strengthening to the whole membership.

There were so many other services to the church provided by The Quilters. They promoted the church's whole program! Sometimes when circumstances made it necessary for announcement regarding some urgent matter be given to the entire membership of the church, the ladies would divide up the lists of members, and would telephone or visit personally, everyone on their list to explain the urgent matter. They got results! Their leader, who was also the President of the Missionary Society, and who was the youngest one of the group, Mrs. O. R. McCoy, known affectionately to everyone as Margaruete.

Regular members of the Quilters whom I can recall off hand were: Mrs. W. L. Ellis; Mrs. Joe Ford; Mrs. W. G. Clarke; Mrs. Minnie B, Stead; Mrs. Shirley Plymale; Mrs. Mabel Black Mrs. Eugene Hickman; Mrs. Eugene Webster, and Mrs. Fred Webster. Bless their hearts! They were really great! Only two of them remain now, Mrs. McCoy and Mrs. Eugene Webster. The others have all gone to their eternal reward!

In Memoriam

Many good laymen and lay women who helped to build the new Westmoreland Methodist Church have their eternal reward. The following is only a partial listing and includes only those whose passing I have heard about. (I have been gone for a long time now and doubtless there are others whose names should be in this list, but about whom I have not heard.

Laymen:

Dr. J. S. Richardson
John McQuaid
Virgil Wellman
O. H. Mills
Owen Hanshaw
P. D. Plymale
Willis Fogle
Joe Ford
F. C. Orner
Fred Webster
Frank Fortner
Harry Witham
E. E. Clarke
Frank Tucker
A. A. Carter
L. E. Woods, Sr.
W. L. Ellis
Paul H. Lowther
I. H. Carr
E. V. Jackson
J. M. Ward
E. G. Mick
M. J. Flesher
Perlie Riggs
M. D. Thompson
H T. Tucker

Laywomen:

Mrs. Fred Webster
Mrs. Joe Ford Martin
Mrs. Eugene Hickman
Mrs. W. G. Clark
Mrs. Mabel Black
Mrs. Merlin Tucker
Mrs. O. K. Walker
Mrs. Virginia Martin
Mrs. W. L. Ellis
Mrs Minnie B. Stead
Mrs Shirley Plymale
Mrs. Mary Ronk

Ministers:

Rolla S. Kenaston
A. E. Beckett
T. M. Zumbrunnen
N. W. Casey
Ivy Yoke
Hugh Kelso
Ralph McCord
W. A. Debar
A. R. Young
F. E. Perry
Bishop U. V. W. Darlington
F. S. Pollitt
M. B. Phillips
Arnold Tulloh
J. E. Wells
S. B. Hart
E. J. Westfall
N. L. Casey
William Vernon Middleton (General Board)

I N M E M O R I A M

Many good laymen and lay-women who helped to build the New Westmoreland Methodist Church have since gone to "That house not made with hands.." and their eternal reward. The following list is only a partial listing and includes only those whose passing I have heard about.---I have been gone for a long time now and doubtless there are others whose name should be in this list, but about whom I have not heard.---

LAYMEN:

Dr. J. S. Richardson
John McQuaid
Virgil Wellman
O. H. Mills
Owen Hanshaw
P. D. Plymale
Willis Fogle
Joe Ford
F. C. Orner
Fred Webster
Frank Fortner
Harry Witham
E. E. Clarke
Frank Tucker
A. A. Carter
L. E. Woods Sr
W. L. Ellis
Paul H. Lowther
I. H. Carr
E. V. Jackson
J. M. Ward
E. G. Mick
M. J. Flesher
Perlie Riggs
M. D. Thompson
H. T. Tucker

LAYWOMEN:

Mrs. Fred Webster
Mrs. Joe Ford
Mrs. Eugene Hickman
Mrs. W. G. Clark
Mrs. Mable Black
Mrs. Merlin Tucker
Mrs. O. K. Walker
Mrs. Virginia Martin
Mrs. W. L. Ellis
Mrs. Minnie B. Stead
Mrs. Shirley Plymale
Mrs. Mary Ronk

MINISTERS:

Rolla S. Kenaston
A. E. Beckett
T. M. Zumbrunnen
N. W. Castel
Ivy Yoke
Hugh Kelso
Ralph McCord
W. A. Debar
A. R. Young
F. E. Perry
Bishop U. V. W. Darlington
F. S. Pollitt
M. B. Phillips
Arnold Tulloh
J. E. Wells
S. B. Hart
E. J. Westfall
N. L. Casey
Wm. Vernon Middleton (general Board)

Lowther Honored

On March 9, 1952, the Reverend Russel Lowther, Minister, First Methodist Church, Williamstown, returned to a former pastorate, the Westmoreland Church, Huntington, W. Va., to be the guest speaker for the day. He found, however, that it was more than simply the appearance of a guest speaker, for the entire program for the day was in his honor and in rememberance of the fine services he rendered while Minister of the church.

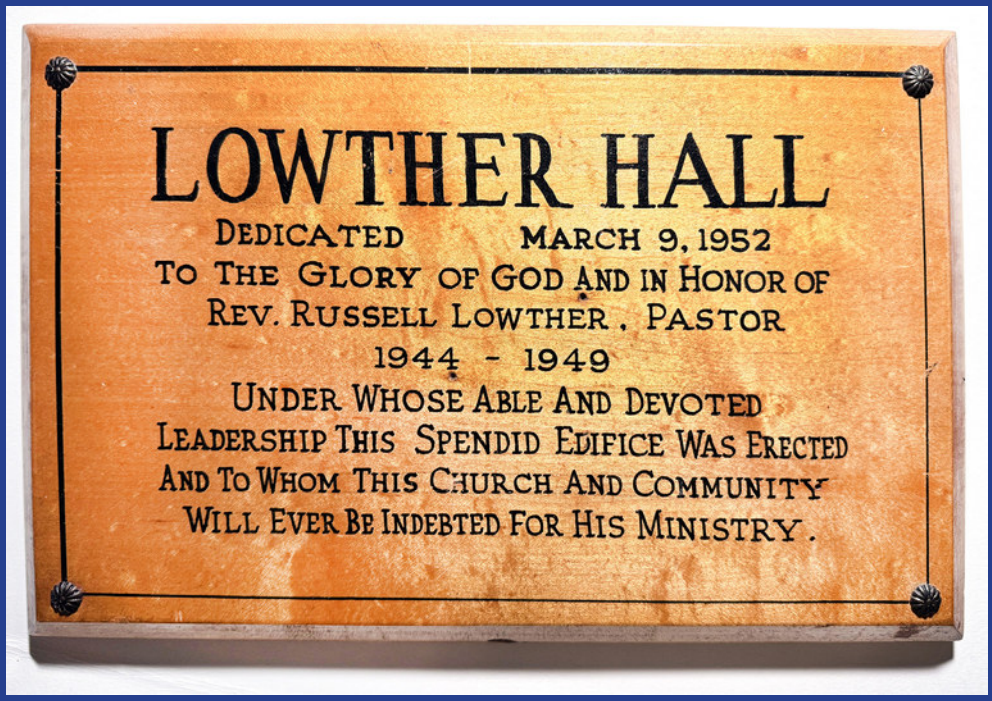
At a dinner for the congregation, following the morning service, the social hall was dedicated as "Lowther Hall." Pictured below is the Reverend William A. Woods, present Minister of the Church, presenting to Mr. Lowther a plaque reading:

> "Lowther Hall . . . . Dedicated March 9, 1952, To the Glory of God in honor of Rev. Russel Lowther, Pastor, 1944-1949. . . Under whose able and devoted leadership this splendid edifice was erected, and to whom this Church and community will ever be indebted for his Ministry.'

Of the Ministry of Mr. Lowther, the present Minister, Mr. Woods says, "Russell had accomplished an outstanding Ministry here, and I, as his immediate successor, realize that perhaps more than any other minister who might ever be assigned here." This is a fine tribute to Mr. Lowther, but an equally fine tribute to the unselfish nature of Mr. Woods, as well.

LOWTHER HALL

DEDICATED MARCH 9, 1952
TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN HONOR OF
REV. RUSSELL LOWTHER . PASTOR
1944 - 1949
UNDER WHOSE ABLE AND DEVOTED
LEADERSHIP THIS SPENDID EDIFICE WAS ERECTED
AND TO WHOM THIS CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
WILL EVER BE INDEBTED FOR HIS MINISTRY .

WESTMORELAND METHODIST
SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 A.M.
MORNING WORSHIP
EVENING SERVICE 7:3

Catherine and Russell Lowther